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NEWS IN REVIEW 570

Editors: *H. M. Olmsted*—City, State, Nation, 570; *Elwood N. Thompson*—Citizen Action, 617; *Elwyn A. Mauck*, County and Township, 621; *Wade S. Smith*, Taxation and Finance, 623; *George H. Hallett, Jr.*, Proportional Representation, 628.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR 572

THE LEAGUE'S CONFERENCE 572

EDITORIAL COMMENT ..... *A. W.* 573

ST. LOUIS STRUGGLES FOR METROPOLITAN SOLUTION ..... *Richard G. Baumhoff* 575

METROPOLITAN GROWING PAINS IN ALLEGHENY COUNTY ..... *H. Marie Dermitt* 579

MRS. MINORITY ..... *Miriam Roher* 585

PLEA FOR AN INFORMED CITIZENRY ..... *James K. Pollock* 590

MANAGER PLAN IN CONNECTICUT TOWNS ..... *Carter W. Atkins* 593

DETROIT'S POLICE MERIT BOARD ..... *John R. Searles* 596

WATCHDOGS FOR THE TREASURY ..... *Lloyd Morey* 603

CONTRIBUTORS IN REVIEW 609

THE RESEARCHER'S DIGEST: SEPTEMBER 611

BOOKS IN REVIEW ..... *Elsie S. Parker* 632

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NATIONAL MUNICIPAL LEAGUE

News in Review

City, State, Nation

Edited by H. M. Olmsted

Local Legislation Attacked in Maryland

Legislative council lists proposals for its reduction

A test may be made of the power and influence of Maryland's newly created Legislative Council[1] at the next session of the General Assembly in January 1941.

Since its establishment in April 1939, the council has held a large number of meetings and has considered many different subjects, the majority of which might be termed politically "innocuous." While not given the power to grapple with that political hobgoblin of long standing—home rule—or more especially "local legislation," the council none the less found itself face to face with it during the pursuit of other problems of the state. The council's research division found that over 50 per cent of the measures enacted by each legislature during the last two decades were for local purposes.

On August 24 the council published a report on local legislation and suggested five proposals for reducing the volume of local bills:

1. General legislation—to cover a variety of situations which now require special acts;
2. Municipal home rule;
3. Administrative control—to the extent of requiring review of bills by state officials prior to submission to the General Assembly;
4. Local control of details—of those problems not state-wide in significance;
5. Municipal code—the classification of cities by population and granting of minimum powers to each.

Bills to relieve the vicious legislative interference with counties and cities have had little success in the past. Whether or not the Legislative Council will be able to overcome this "lethargy" (politics) on the part of legislators is at best doubtful. Regardless of the outcome it is to the council's credit that it had the courage to attack a problem which has always been obnoxious to the state legislature.

The wide publicity which this report has received in the press of the state may at least focus the attention of civic organizations upon the problem and it is to be hoped that some of them may be inspired to bring pressure to bear upon their lawmakers.

HUGH A. BONE
University of Maryland

[1]See "A Legislative Council For Maryland", by author, NATIONAL MUNICIPAL REVIEW, June 1939.

New York Mayors Ask State Purchasing Plan

At the annual convention of the New York State Conference of Mayors and Other Municipal Officials the 511 delegates, representing 133 cities and villages, unanimously adopted a resolution petitioning the State Commissioner of Standards and Purchase "to devise and put into operation a plan whereby any city or village may purchase through the state agency, at bulk or quantity prices, supplies and equipment which cannot be purchased locally."

Other important resolutions dealt with present and proposed studies of the review of property assessments, laws for effective state-wide regulation of tank trucks transporting flammable

liquids, and a report on procedure regarding local home rule legislation as a guide for villages of the first class.

Iowa Municipalities Act on Important Problems

The League of Iowa Municipalities, at its annual meeting held in Council Bluffs recently, passed the following resolutions:

1. Coöperation of the league with the national defense program;
2. Home rule for cities;
3. Reduction of the number of councilmen to three including the mayor, and extension of their terms of office from four to six years in cities of 50,000 and over;
4. Extension of federal social security old-age insurance to non-elective city officers;
5. Revision of the Iowa code to permit the highway commission to extend primary roads into cities.

E. M.

New Hampshire Needs Municipal Association

The high point of the third Institute of Public Affairs held at the University of New Hampshire, in so far as New Hampshire municipalities are concerned, was a plea by Edward J. Gallagher, former mayor of Laconia, for a municipal association for the state. After explaining the programs of various groups of public officials in the state he concluded that a municipal association would unite all municipal officials into one state-wide association.

LASHLEY G. HARVEY
University of New Hampshire

Council-Manager Plan News

North Adams and **Quincy, Massachusetts,** have filed petitions for a vote on Plan E (manager government with proportional representation) at the November election. **Haverhill** will vote on Plan D (manager plan without P.R.). Petitions filed for a vote on Plan E in **Lynn** have been declared insufficient by the Board of Election Commissioners. In all, five Massachusetts cities are seeking a manager vote this year, **Cambridge** and **Chicopee** having filed Plan E petitions earlier.

Petitions were placed in circulation last month in **West New York, New Jersey,** calling for a change in government to the city manager form. They have been sponsored by an independent group headed by Francis D. Murphy, former president of the Board of Education, a candidate for the city commission last year and a vigorous critic of the present administration.

A city manager plan referendum in **Bayonne, New Jersey,** as called for by a petition filed early in July, was set for July 23 under provisions of the election laws, but has been postponed by litigation. Former Recorder Daniel J. Murray, leader in the Bayonne movement, has been fighting to force the referendum on the ballot.

A city manager movement in **Danville, Virginia,** was launched at the July meeting of the city council by Councilman Patton Wilson who called for a councilmanic conference to consider the manager plan. This action created some surprise, but Mr. Wilson said he believed there was a strong public opinion for the manager form of government for Danville. It is reported, however, that the necessary amendment to the charter cannot be obtained until the state legislature meets again.

In **New Bern, North Carolina,** the city clerk has announced that the advocates of the manager plan were unable to secure the requisite number of signatures.

The City Manager League of **Columbus, Ohio,** is working to submit the manager plan to the voters in 1941.

(Continued on page 613)

Letters to the Editor

Still "A Secret in Rochester"

To the Editor of the
NATIONAL MUNICIPAL REVIEW:

I want to congratulate you on the editorial which appeared in your magazine, reprinted in the issue of the [Rochester] *Democrat & Chronicle* under date of July 13, headed "A Secret in Rochester."

I am one of the two councilmen who voted against the removal of City Manager Baker, and, although I have made attempts at council meetings to ascertain the reason for the dismissal of City Manager Baker, up to now the majority in the Council have refused to give any information and it still is a secret in Rochester.

The apparent reason is that he refused to play ball with some of the local Republican political leaders. He had the welfare of the city of Rochester at heart and would not be a party to satisfying selfish interests of petty politicians.

Comment by the editor of the *Democrat & Chronicle* on your editorial is interesting. However, it does not tell the whole story—in trying to put the reason for dismissal on the grounds that City Manager Baker could not and did not adhere to the policies of the Republican party platform.

JOSEPH E. SILVERSTEIN
Rochester Councilman at Large

A Detroiter is Proud of His City

To the Editor of the
NATIONAL MUNICIPAL REVIEW:

I note your editorial, July issue, on "Test of Patriotism." If you are interested, our Detroit record of 1917-18 furnishes a fine demonstration of the success achieved when war in Europe is made the occasion of increased and effective efforts to strengthen local government in the United States.

Our modern charter movement started early in 1917, at the time when the United States got into the World War. "War Must Not Destroy Civic Efficiency" was our slogan. For war or for peace, it was contended the charter movement was doubly necessary. The vote for adoption was taken June 25, 1918, etc., etc. So the record here proves the validity of your contention.

W. P. LOVETT
Detroit Citizens League

46th Annual

NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON GOVERNMENT

NOV. 18, 19, and 20, 1940

SPRINGFIELD, MASS.

Headquarters: **Hotel Kimball, rates $3.00 single, $5.00 double.**

National Municipal Review

Editorial Comment

Defense Plans in Our Cities

AS WE contemplate the sudden conquest of other countries which became aware of their danger too late and which were too deliberate about making themselves strong, it is easy to understand the panting earnestness of the demand that we "do something" and do it fast.

There is and will continue to be plenty to do. More than a few national and local governments wish today that they had begun years ago instead of months ago to do those tasks to which they are now bending every ounce of energy.

Whether our problem is to prepare for a war which we admittedly will not welcome any more than did the people of other countries, or whether it is to prepare for a peace in which we will try to save for ourselves and the world some of the principles which are precious to us, the United States has a prodigious task ahead of it.

Our cities and other communities will be important cogs in the defense machine which is being slowly designed and constructed. But it may be in order, even at the risk of seeming to throw cold water on patriotic enthusiasm, to suggest that this is a time for cities to avoid hasty, ill-conceived action.

Recently a mayor urged that his city's fire trucks be equipped with anti-aircraft guns. Many local committees have added to the confusion in Washington by descending on busy officials with demands for armament factories, pilot training schools, and airports. There have even been a few indications of the beginnings of violent attitudes which come with war hysteria.

These things do not help. More than that, they are clearly dangerous if only because they tend to create ill feeling and to undermine the unanimity of thought and purpose which is so necessary.

When a great land which has preeminently been dedicated to the cause of peace and disarmament suddenly decides to be strong in a violent world, the task is even more prodigious than we yet realize. We can gather a faint idea of its proportions by looking at the valiant efforts and sacrifices of our Canadian neighbors.

As our plans gain momentum and we see the problem more clearly the responsibilities to be assumed by our communities and our states will be more readily discernable. Listing here what they might turn out to be in the fields of economics, production, public health, police, housing, etc., would seem to serve no useful purpose, nor, at this stage, would it be more than disturbing to attempt to find guidance in the activities of British cities—the building of air raid shelters, expansion and training of departments assisting in civil defense, control of traffic during blackouts, plans for evacuation of cities, and the like.[1]

The chief need is for orderly plan-

[1]See also "British Local Governments and the War," p. 616 of this issue.

ning and integration. At this stage it is still very much a job for the experts. Ideas and discussion are always in order—at least in this country—but this is no time to mount our horse and gallop off in all directions.

P. R. Fable, French Version

RECENTLY a politically-minded gentleman advanced the mistaken claim that France had the proportional representation system of voting and that somehow this "fact" had an important connection with that unfortunate country's inability to resist Hitler's legions.

The truth is that France *never* had proportional representation. All recent parliaments have been elected entirely on the majority principle under a system which differed only in minor details from our own method of electing members of Congress.

It may not be particularly constructive to discuss a political falsehood like this in detail or to excuse the politician by explaining how he happened to be "misinformed." But the fact that this myth—that France has been using P. R. and that its many parties were a natural result of that system—is likely to persist, makes it advisable that thoughtful persons understand some of the details.

In 1919 an electoral bill was adopted for French parliamentary elections which, when first proposed, provided for a party list system of proportional representation. It still kept the name "proportional representation" in its final form even though it had been so amended on its way through Parliament that it gave representation to minorities only in certain special circumstances and then hardly ever in proportion to their strength. This unsatisfactory compromise was abandoned in 1927 and, since then, the ordinary majority system has been in effect in small constituencies, with a second ballot in case no one candidate received a majority in the first balloting.

Proportional representation, particularly in its best form as used in New York and Cincinnati, cannot be charged with any tendency to produce the bloc system or a multiplicity of parties. This is dramatically illustrated by the one-party government of Eire, which uses P. R. in this same best form, and by the fact that only two parties are represented in the legislative assembly of Tasmania, which also has used this best form continuously since 1907. Meanwhile, the other Australian provinces, which do not have P. R., have more than two parties.

It was about seven years ago that opponents of P. R. in this country began charging, equally falsely, that P. R. made the rise of Hitler possible; whereas the fact is that Germany never had the Hare system of proportional representation, used in American cities, Eire, and other English-speaking communities.

These and other arguments of the same general nature and of equally baseless origin prove nothing so much

(Continued on page 610)

St. Louis Struggles for Metropolitan Solution

City continues to lose population to suburbs, suffers from loss of business, reduction in revenue, blighted areas, while surrounding communities grow apace.

By RICHARD G. BAUMHOFF
St. Louis Post-Dispatch

LOSS of population by the city of St. Louis for the first time in its 176 years' existence and the sprawling residential growth of the St. Louis County suburbs may lead to new efforts for some sort of governmental merger of these separate but closely related units of the metropolis of Missouri.

When it became known last summer that the city had declined in population from 821,960 to 813,748 in the last decade and had yielded seventh place among American municipalities to Baltimore, Mayor Bernard F. Dickmann made an informal proposal for annexation of the most populous suburban area. He asserted that the city would gain only in population, but that the suburbs would benefit through better governmental services and facilities and that much administrative duplication could be eliminated.

Civic agencies, having become painfully aware of the clumsy situation created by arbitrary political boundaries, already were quietly considering some means of correction. Two attempts at merger had failed in the last fourteen years, so the movement has proceeded cautiously, without fanfare. New action has not crystallized.

St. Louis cannot annex its built-up outskirts at will; its sixty-one square miles of territory lie within an iron-clad boundary which has not changed since 1876. Formerly the nation's fourth city, it has been passed by Detroit, Los Angeles, and Cleveland, because they have expanded extensively, and by Baltimore, largely because of the overflow of New Deal agencies from Washington.

In 1876, tired of the domination of county politicians and the inefficient superimposition of county and municipal governments—which is still the pattern of most American communities—St. Louis separated from St. Louis County. Since then the city has been an independent quasi-county, chartered by direct authority of the state.

Without mutual consent, annexation—merger is the more polite term, adopted to spare the feelings of the suburbanites—is impossible. It has been talked of often, and came before the voters three times—in 1924, 1926, and 1930.

The action of 1924 was merely adoption by the voters of the state of an amendment to the constitution providing the mechanics of action. Under it a board of freeholders, appointed by officials of the city and county, labored for a year, with much sincere effort, to submit a

workable scheme. On the final proposal, for a direct consolidation of city and county, the board, evenly divided between city and county members, was deadlocked until one man switched to permit a popular vote.

CITY FOR: COUNTY AGAINST

At a special election in October 1926 the plan was laid before the voters; the result was quite apparent even before the polls opened. The county voted it down, two to one, with 67 per cent of its electorate casting ballots; the city favored it, seven to one, out of only 22 per cent of the voting strength. The figures: county for the merger, 10,962; against it, 23,059; city for, 54,558; against, 8,067. Favorable majorities on both sides of the boundary line were required for passage.

With the backing of the city Chamber of Commerce a new movement soon started in which Professor Thomas H. Reed, widely known expert on municipal affairs, was brought in as consultant and head of a planning staff. This led to submission to voters of the whole state of another proposed constitutional amendment in 1930. Under it the people of the city and county would have been authorized to adopt a charter creating a city of Greater St. Louis, to deal with certain governmental functions but preserving for all other purposes the right of self-government for municipalities then existing.

The proposition was defeated in the state at large, under the onslaught of rearoused county opposition. The state vote was 218,381 for and 375,718 against.

This time there was a greater local turnout at the polls, for the proposal was submitted at a regular state election. The county majority was not quite so overwhelming and the margin was close in the city. Again, the figures: county for, 14,174; against, 21,669; city for, 63,253; against 58,683.

Two things counted principally against both the 1926 and 1930 schemes in the county—suburbanites and farmers feared that any sort of amalgamation with the city would increase the level of real estate assessments and hence the taxes, and the suburban dwellers were vehement in their preference for small, responsive town governments by business and professional men whom they knew as neighbors, in contrast to the politicians' government of the city. At that time the erratic Victor J. Miller, Republican, was mayor. He was succeeded by Mr. Dickmann, Democrat, still in office, and the general character of the city government has not changed in a way to commend it to county people. Back of popular feeling, of course, was the desire of county officeholders and politicians to retain their jobs.

The amendment of 1926 still remains on the books. A plan may be submitted to the people under it not oftener than once in five years. A board of freeholders must be appointed on petition of a small number of voters, separately on each side of the line—about 7,500 in the city and 2,100 in the county.

Three general alternatives are pro-

vided for in this amendment. They are: (1) consolidation of the territories and governments of the city and county as one legal subdivision under the municipal government of the city; (2) re-entry of the city into the county, together with reorganization and consolidation of the city and county in the pre-1876 pattern, leaving the city free to carry out annexations of the county under the legal form provided for other Missouri municipalities; (3) outright annexation of part of the county by the city, without altering the relationship otherwise of the two units.

It is doubtful whether either the second or third alternatives could be adopted, no matter how attractive a plan might be. The people of the city are unwilling to go back into the county, with attendant multiplication of officials and politicians. Slicing off a chunk of the county outright would create objectionable economic and governmental problems for the impoverished balance of the county. If anything will work it will have to be either the first existing alternative or something novel under a new enabling law.

METROPOLITAN AREA SUGGESTED

At the Chamber of Commerce in the city recent informal talk has been of the creation of some sort of generalized metropolitan district, which could care for some of the more obvious mutual problems, such as policing, water supply, and sewage disposal. However, weaknesses inherent in such an idea are recognized. The Mayor's suggestion for annexation would take over the most heavily populated suburbs and leave a region of small subdivisions, estates, farms, woods, and hills.

Conditions have changed sharply since 1926. The county has grown and its government has improved; the city has declined to such an extent that downtown merchants are genuinely concerned over loss of business in the decentralization movement, while the type of municipal government has remained the same under the 1914 charter.

Repeal of prohibition played a part in improvement of the county through removal of temptations for law-enforcement agencies. Commercialized gambling has been effectively barred in the county in recent years, as it long has been in the city. Although the county government still lacks legislative authority, the so-called County Court, which is in reality a three-man administrative commission, has a somewhat more clearly defined path. A county comptroller and budget system have been installed. The fee system for constables has been abolished and the number of deputies restricted, so that traps for motorists have been eliminated. Authority has been granted for county planning and zoning under an official master plan, whereas in the city the plan is not officially binding.

The number of incorporated cities and villages in the county has doubled and trebled, until now there are about forty, making an almost solid ring around the central city. Their existence has solved some of the most pressing problems of the suburbs by providing needed services and legis-

lative power. The county's population has grown from 100,737 in 1920 and 211,593 in 1930, to 273,533 now.

Largely under the impetus of the Federal Housing Administration plan of home financing, new subdivisions and informal clusters of dwellings have sprung up throughout the county in the years since the depth of the depression. Meanwhile a cancerous property blight has spread over much of the city for reasons too numerous to list here. There has been residential growth only in rather limited outlying parts of the city.

All this is in marked contrast with the physical situation prevailing when the city and county separated, way back in 1876. At that time the city was built up perhaps only halfway to the new boundary and Forest Park was scoffed at as being out in the country. Settlements in the county were few and small; it was a rich, rural farming area. The railroads, offering commuter service, helped develop the early suburbs along fan-like lines. Farming now is a minority pursuit of the county; the farms have been gradually turned into rich men's estates or white-collar subdivisions. Often when leaders are sought for strictly city offices or activities it is found that the men and women suggested are ineligible because they live in the county.

Decentralization is hitting the city hard in many ways—economic, social, and political. It has cut down municipal tax revenues, changed the characteristics of the inhabitants and voters. The city needs some form of combined community management; the county doubtless needs it, too, but there the need is less apparent and the public tendency is to feel that any type of merger would be harmful.

What proponents of any new plan will have to do is to make the people on both sides of the invisible line see clearly that it is a mutual community problem, that what hurts or helps one area harms or benefits the other. The city is the workshop, the county to a large extent the bedroom and recreation ground of the real Greater St. Louis.

NEEDS OF COUNTY

There are tangible signs that county politicians, who, incidentally, have become more machine-like in their operations as the population swelled, are aware of the inadequacy of county government, in spite of various piecemeal improvements. They recognize that something radical must be done sooner or later, and probably fairly soon. Opposed to outright consolidation with the city, they have been inclined lately to the view that a modern county charter would be the thing, leaving the city to its own devices. Coincident with this trend is the feeling that the ninety-odd big and little school districts in the county should be consolidated as one or in groups.

At Clayton, the county seat, which adjoins the decaying West End of the city, stands a crumbling, antiquated courthouse, erected in 1878 and added to in poor style from time

(Continued on page 592)

Metropolitan Growing Pains in Allegheny County

"If at first you don't succeed, try try again," motto of citizens of Pennsylvania's second largest county; defeats fail to dampen ardor for sound solution of metropolitan question.

By H. MARIE DERMITT
Civic Club of Allegheny County

THE county of Allegheny is made up of three distinct areas of radically different character: the 54.2 thickly-settled square miles of the city of Pittsburgh, the partly built-up boroughs which cluster about the city, and meagerly settled townships and boroughs. Including three cities, sixty-six boroughs and fifty-two townships, the county is fourteen times bigger than the city, fanning out over 741 square miles.

The "Metropolitan Plan," originating in Pittsburgh, was designed to provide this extensive area with a modern municipal organization. It has been remarked that "nowhere in the world has any district attempted covering so much unsettled land with a city blanket." The long and complex history of the Metropolitan Plan movement is thus of considerable interest to students of American municipal affairs.

The first real impetus for the consolidation movement dates back to the early years of the present century and to the forcible annexation by the city of Pittsburgh of old Allegheny City. The reform movement for consolidation of local governments, which had ended in a definite annexation measure in 1854, was reflected in the legislature for many years. Until 1905, however, there had been no conscious movement toward consolidation in Pittsburgh. Then the state legislature was induced to pass an act specifically providing that the annexation of Allegheny City to the larger city of Pittsburgh should be permitted.

There is little doubt that this act—passed in 1906—was so framed that Allegheny City could be absorbed with or without her consent. It was the majority vote of Pittsburgh that baptized the new combination, calling it "Greater Pittsburgh."

The resentment on the part of Allegheny City residents which followed this cavalier treatment fanned into flame a state-wide organization of considerable importance. In December of 1910 a number of citizens of other contiguous boroughs met and formed the League of Boroughs and Townships of Allegheny County, designed primarily to prevent a repetition of Pittsburgh's land grab. That there was, by this time, a very real movement toward further consolidation had been indicated by the 1909 legislature which had received a metropolitan bill aimed at further forcible annexations.

The chief objective of this body, numbering representatives from 122 separate political units, came to be opposition to the principle of forcible

annexation. The body constituted itself as a watch dog, fighting such bills as the 1911 proposal of the late William Addison Magee, then mayor of Pittsburgh, who introduced a measure similar to the one which had died in committee two years before. In this opposition lay the real basis for the Metropolitan Plan.

It is worth mentioning, perhaps, that the comprehensive report of the Committee on Taxation Study, appointed by the Pittsburgh Council in 1916, included recommendations "for the absorption of outlying suburbs whose inhabitants make their living in the city but pay no taxes for the city privileges they enjoy" and for the creation of a metropolitan district. There was also an act of 1919 which provided for the establishment of a Bureau of Municipalities with broad planning and publicity powers.

CITIZENS QUESTIONED

In 1921 there occurred a brief flurry of excitement when the Civic Club of Allegheny County, which was absolutely opposed to forcible annexation, mailed a test questionnaire to a selected list of several thousand citizens in four boroughs adjacent to Pittsburgh. The answers to the questionnaire indicated that the sentiment of the various communities was toward some improved organization under which the various municipalities of the county could coöperate more effectively to secure greater efficiency and greater economy. A plan was proposed based on the metropolitan idea. Certain services were to be administered under centralized control, in which various sections of the district had representation, while others were to be retained by the municipalities for local administration.

A succession of vitriolic articles immediately appeared in the house organ of the League of Boroughs and Townships. The Civic Club, in order to counteract the impression that it was favoring annexation, arranged a series of forums. At one of these the league proposed that a committee be appointed "to consider the situation as it then existed." The committee was to be made up of both Civic Club and league members, equally divided. As an evidence of good faith, the Civic Club agreed to this suggestion and appointments were made by the presidents of both organizations. The committee, however, did not feel that it had the proper authority to function, and its study did not result in any concrete action.

A bill to create a metropolitan district in Allegheny County was finally introduced in the state legislature in 1923 during the second administration of Mayor Magee. This proposal provided for the creation of incorporated districts, extending over more than one municipality, for the purpose of construction, maintenance, and operation of public works. It included power to levy taxes not to exceed in any one year 2.75 mills upon the assessed valuation of the taxable property within the district, to incur indebtedness not in excess of 3 per cent of assessed valuation, to levy assessments against all properties, whether abutting or not, which were especially benefited by such public works. The bill likewise pro-

vided that no such incorporated district could be created or its boundaries extended or its powers increased except by consent of at least a majority of the residents.

COMMISSION CREATED

This metropolitan bill—the first comprehensive proposal—was withdrawn at the request of the league, and a new bill was passed creating a commission of twenty-four members to study municipal consolidation in counties of the second class (only Allegheny County falls within this category). Appointments were made by Governor Gifford Pinchot who drew largely from the membership of the League of Boroughs and Townships. A preliminary report of 1924 and a minority report were subsequently filed with the Governor in 1925. The commission at that time asked for another two-year term together with an appropriation of five thousand dollars, both of which were granted the same year.

The commission, in its 1925 report, recommended a consolidated city to comprise all of Allegheny County. An amendment to the state constitution was presented to the legislature but was held in committee. A subsequent constitutional amendment was entered in the special session of 1926. It passed, but in the last few hours of the session—too late to make a correction—enemies of the consolidated city plan inserted a joker providing that, for passage of a charter, a two-to-one majority vote in a majority of the individual municipalities would be required in addition to a majority vote in the county. This handicap had to be accepted, however, since a constitutional amendment must be passed by two successive legislatures to become effective. The amendment was therefore passed in this form by the 1926 and 1927 legislative sessions.

In the meantime, and as a result of the 1927 legislative session, the Metropolitan Commission continued its work. As a result the electorate approved the amendment at the election of November 1928, and it became part of the state constitution. The amendment, in its final form, authorized the legislature to submit to the people of Allegheny County a charter providing for:

1. A metropolitan form of government, under the name of the city of Pittsburgh, which in effect would actually have been the county government endowed with additional powers;

2. The continued existence (within the new metropolitan scheme) of all cities, boroughs, and townships in their current form and with complete power over all matters of local interest.

The year 1929 saw an exciting year of county political history. A fourth report of the Metropolitan Commission was submitted in the form of a charter, which received almost immediate popular and press support. It aroused equally as bitter opposition from political jobholders. Among other things, it sought to standardize volunteer fire department systems and to abolish the minor judiciary. Both the firemen's organizations and the minor judiciary immediately jumped into the fray and brought sufficient pres-

sure to bear to cause amendment of the charter. As finally passed by the legislature, the charter none the less contained at least 65 per cent of the commission's recommendations.

According to the terms of the amended charter the boroughs and townships were to get:

1. A constitutional guarantee of their independence, boundaries, government, and names;
2. Perpetual security against forced annexation with an option to "vote in" if they wished;
3. Continued control of local streets, sewers, municipal electric light plants and water works, and other local services;
4. Independent police and fire departments;
5. An independent system of taxing and bonding power;
6. Every other local power not specifically conferred by the charter on the new metropolitan government.

The city of Pittsburgh and the county of Allegheny were to get:

1. The advantages of a United States census rating as the fourth city in the country with a probable population, according to the 1930 census, of 1,500,000;
2. Improvements and savings in metropolitan administration;
3. An opportunity to work for a solution of problems common to the whole area; i.e., planning, transportation, traffic, sanitation, health, charities, major public works, public utilities, recreation.
4. A sense of unity and community spirit;
5. The magnetic attraction that a great population always has for new industries, opening as it does new areas of purchasing power;
6. The advantages of coöperation with individual units in promoting a generally finer community life.

CHARTER MEETS DEFEAT

After passage of the charter by the legislature, the commission set to work on an intensive educational campaign preparatory to its submission to the voters on June 25, 1929. The charter, however, shared the fate of previous attempts, going down to defeat under the two-to-one majority clause.

After the plan met defeat the Metropolitan Commission petitioned the county commissioners to resubmit the issue at the regular November election. Because of failure of the enabling amendment to provide specifically for such action, it was found necessary to test the propriety of the move in the courts. The Common Pleas Court of Allegheny County finally decreed against resubmission of the charter (1929 P.D. 573), and its decision was subsequently upheld by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court in 1930.

In 1931 the legislature failed to continue the life of the commission. It continued to function, however, as an unofficial body. That same year the commission offered an amendment designed to eliminate the two-to-one majority clause of the charter, an amendment which was quickly adopted by the legislatures of 1931 and 1933 and accepted by the voters of the state on November 7, 1933.

The new provisions of the amendment merely demanded that a ma-

jority vote from the county as a whole and a majority vote of a majority of the municipalities would be required.

In 1934 the Allegheny County Commissioners created a new body called the Peoples Metropolitan Commission. It was made up of twenty-four citizens, each commissioner having named eight. Made up of attorneys, civic leaders, and a few ward, borough, and township officials, the new body did not include any of the surviving members of the old commission. It was hoped the commission would, after adequate study and a number of hearings, recommend a Metropolitan Plan which the county commissioners could present to the legislature as the formal and official preference of the entire county.

The conclusions of the peoples commission, which continued in active existence until 1935, are best summarized in the words of a resolution adopted early in the life of the commission. This resolution called the Metropolitan Plan idea "highly essential . . . in order to attain efficiency in government and a reduction in taxes"; but pointed out that the restrictions and limitations embodied in the constitutional amendments of 1929 and 1933 were of so extensive a nature that any plan evolved would "serve only to continue most of the existing governmental evils which we oppose," and would impose upon the municipalities a "greater and more expensive government and a consequent increase in taxation." The resolution said flatly that the commission was opposed to *any* metropolitan charter "which can be drafted under the present amendments." It urged, however, that the commission be continued in existence for the purpose of proposing to a prospective constitutional convention other provisions which would make possible the drafting of a proper and adequate charter and would suggest measures to eliminate existing governmental evils.

A change in the political complexion of the Board of County Commissioners in 1935, however, occasioned a shift in community interest. The leading members of the body felt that any further recommendations should come from a new membership, and the Peoples Commission died a polite and painless death.

COMMISSION REORGANIZED

In response to a suggestion from the Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce, the Metropolitan Plan Commission, originally created by an act of legislature and appointed by Governors Gifford Pinchot and John Fisher, was reorganized and enlarged. The commission immediately introduced another bill which passed in the Senate but went down to defeat in the House.

The new bill, more comprehensive than any that had been submitted up to that time, marked an important milestone in the progress of the metropolitan idea. It suggested drastic reallocations in the county government. It authorized the incorporation into "Metropolitan Pittsburgh" of any subdivision in the county which approved the move in an election and secured the consent

of the county commissioners. Under the provisions of the bill, the county would have been empowered: to take over zoning regulations, to maintain through highways, to create special districts for the operation of public utilities, to maintain a county police force, to regulate smoke, to establish uniform property assessments.

To administer the new unit, the bill proposed that seven commissioners be elected by the various districts with the board electing the chairman. The district attorney, recorder of deeds, sheriff, controller, and coroner were to be retained as elected officers; the county treasurer, clerk of courts, register of wills, and prothonetary were to be appointed—the courts to appoint the last three and a new officer, the public administrator, to appoint the treasurer.

The public administrator, under the terms of the bill, was to be appointed by the county commissioners who would become the chief executive officers of the district and name the heads of the departments of finance, health, safety, public works, welfare, parks and recreation, planning, personnel, and law.

The bill also consolidated the poor districts, created a municipal instead of a county court, and abolished the offices of all aldermen, justices of the peace, and constables, whose functions would be absorbed by the new court. The City Board of Assessors and the City Welfare Department were also slated for dismissal with a new county assessor empowered to make all assessments. The bill did not affect the jury commission, the registration commission, the schools, or the courts.

After the defeat of this bill, the Pennsylvania Taxpayers Forum sponsored another amendment which was passed in 1937. There were, however, several hurdles to clear, and the amendment finally fell by the wayside.

In 1939 another renascence of the metropolitan idea took place, initiated by a petition of fourteen prominent citizens addressed to Mayor Cornelius D. Scully. The Mayor enthusiastically welcomed the chance to consummate the years of effort, and a committee appointed by him drew up an extremely interesting draft of a bill. This bill carried the old guarantees against forcible annexation, but included several decided departures from previous suggestions. It proposed to vest full administrative authority in a public administrator whose appointment, salary, and tenure were at the disposal of seven elected commissioners, who were to receive $5,000 a year apiece with $7,500 for the board-selected chairman and were to be elected at large by proportional representation. A new departure, too, was a proposed civil service system applicable to all employees of the consolidated city. In addition to abolishing elected squires and constables, judicial powers of mayors and magistrates were to be eliminated. As a substitute a circulating municipal court was proposed.

These outstanding novelties, however, provoked immediate opposition. Facing a deadline for the introduction of new legislation into the House and with third-class cities lined up against it, heroic action alone could

(Continued on page 602)

Mrs. Minority

Genevieve B. Earle, New York City's first and only councilwoman, believes that woman's place is in the home — sometimes.

By MIRIAM ROHER
National Municipal League

THIRTY-TWO years ago Genevieve Beavers walked into the office of the New York Bureau of Municipal Research and asked for a job. As a young girl only a year out of Adelphi, an agreeable woman's college on Long Island, she was "no use to them at all." So they let her work without pay for five months.

She stayed five years, and in 1937 became the first and only woman elected to the city council of the largest city in the world. Two years later, she became the first and only woman to hold the position of minority leader in any legislative body.

In the three decades between her apprenticeship to municipal research and her election to New York City's council, Genevieve B. Earle has ranged so widely over the field of civic endeavor that the six closely typed, severely outlined pages of her career read almost like an encyclopedia of community betterment. She has been actively connected with pioneering efforts in budgeting, public health nursing, administrative codes, weights and measures legislation, municipal reference libraries, police conditions, philanthropic organization, the Gary Plan for schools, vocational training and placement, reorganization of state government, European war relief, child welfare, anti-war work, community centers, city planning, the legal marriage age, the blind, leisure, fine arts, city charters, shade trees in Brooklyn, unemployment, and the election of mayors and governors—to name only some. She has been associated with innumerable "organizations." And she has maintained a home and raised two children to maturity.

The important fact about Genevieve B. Earle now, in 1940, is that she is the leader and the rallying point of the only progressive group of legislators that New York City has had in many years. And a woman to boot.

The story of Mrs. Earle is that of a professional leader of citizens. Not of a hysterical feminine reformer. Not of a housewife converted picturesquely and amateurishly to public work. Not of a feminist bent on subjecting men to women. Nor of a lady politician—although she can give and take with the best and worst of the boys. It is simply the story of a woman interested in government since childhood and actively and successfully associated with government ever since. Why?

"I believe that government, both good and bad, is the single most important influence on everything and everybody."

That simple statement sums up her philosophy and her career. As for the wide range of her activities: "I like to take lost causes. Emer-

gencies are my specialty. When a thing needs to be done, and there's no one else to do it, what else can I do?"

It may be that kind of "emergency" which will keep Mrs. Earle in the New York City council for a third term. Only reluctantly did she decide to run for a second term.

MRS. GENEVIEVE B. EARLE
New York City Councilwoman

"There are other ways in which I should like to serve the city, since I am not a good debater," she says frankly. "But there were two considerations which determined me to make the run again. I feared that if I did not risk a second campaign, it would be said everywhere that an independent does not care to risk defeat since the question of public support is so important. The second consideration was the fear that since I was the only woman in the city council, my failure to become a candidate might be misunderstood and those who are interested in women in public office might become disheartened and say that a woman 'couldn't take it'."

The lady from Brooklyn decidedly can "take it" but it has been a hard and disheartening job. During her first term she was serving on the minority side of a council almost evenly divided between the Democratic machine (Tammany men and their spiritual first cousins) and a miscellany of Fusion followers of Mayor LaGuardia. It was the first council to be elected under the new and immensely superior New York City charter (Mrs. Earle was the only woman member of the committee which framed it), the first council to be elected in New York City under proportional representation, and the first council in decades which the Democratic machine did not overwhelmingly control. While that council served a shockingly no-nothing term because of the obstructionism of the bare Democratic majority, it was a term replete with drama and color and it marked a renascence of the liberal spirit in New York City legislative affairs which was immensely heartening to those who hoped for a machine minority next time.

Moreover, for the first time in years constructive ideas were being sounded on the floor of New York's beautiful colonial council-chamber—ideas, for instance, about abolition of numerous expensive sinecures in New York City's obsolete county "governments," a fight led by Mrs. Earle and repeatedly sabotaged by the Democrats. One dramatic debate on the subject resulted in a twenty-hour all-night session. (At 5 A.M. her husband woke up, noticed she

wasn't home yet, and notified the police that his wife was missing!)

While the second councilmanic election in 1939 resulted in Mrs. Earle's re-election at the top of the Brooklyn slate, and while it produced a twenty-one-member council whose calibre and composition was, on the whole, immensely superior to the old board of aldermen, there was plenty of grief in the returns for the Fusion-LaGuardia forces. The machine had an array of fourteen worthies to a mere seven of the independent stamp. And the independents were a motley group whose cohesion in time of pressure could not always be relied on.

MINORITY LEADER

Then B. Charney Vladeck, minority leader in the first council, died suddenly toward the end of his first term and eight months ago Mrs. Earle succeeded to his mantle. Like Finland, in recent months, Mrs. Earle and her puny band have fought the machine in a series of legislative encounters doomed from the start by the disparity in numbers.

Is the fight worth carrying on? That goes without saying. Mrs. Earle is taking her county reform fight over the heads of the council to the people, and she and the citizens groups which back her are getting their referendum petitions signed in spite of the infinite variety of obstructionist tactics which the Democrats in the council always have up their sleeves.

The only reason she is dubious about a try at a third term is the personal sacrifice involved. "After all, it does take it out of you!" she says bluntly. "And when you're getting older—" She has no vanity about her age—tells everyone she's "as old as the Brooklyn Bridge, but in much better condition." A little research discloses that the bridge was opened in 1883.

Not too old for more, judging by the vigorous way she talks and acts, the full life she lives and obviously enjoys. She is a solid-looking woman, with a strong face and a capable figure. Not at all masculine, but more like the women who in another day ran huge family establishments and the neighboring countryside as well. Not that she is a "managing" woman, either. Decisive and firm, perhaps, but the voice that floats out over the council chamber is so ladylike and cultured that compared with the New York-accented bassos that precede and follow her remarks, it is like a fresh spring day juxtaposed with "cloudy and showers."

It may be that the machine men were thinking of these voice contrasts when they took themselves and their council-mates abruptly out of the hearing of the voters of the city. During the first term of the P.R. council their deliberations were broadcast over the municipal radio station, to the delight of many thousands of listeners, who rated it better in entertainment value than Jack Benny. Then, for reasons best known to themselves, but suspected by many, the Democrats decided they would prefer to vote down reforms in less exposed fashion, and as soon as the minority was whittled down by the second election they steam-

rollered the broadcasts out, in spite of a spirited defense by Mrs. Earle and her minority.

How does a woman with a man-sized job in public life manage her "womanly" duties as well? Even in these days when career women are numerous enough to be accepted in theory, common prejudice still has a sneaking suspicion that the professional woman can't possibly hold her end up as far as *kinder, kuche, und kirche* are concerned.

The crowded agenda of Mrs. Earle's life should provide one more blow to that prejudice. Until her husband died a short time ago, she not only managed a full-fledged household but gave aid and comfort in the illness of two of its members. In the presence of the interviewer, she turned down a speaking date on the subject nearest her heart—county reorganization—in order to devote herself entirely to her husband and daughter.

FAMILY APPROVAL

Not that her family jealously demanded these things. Both were proud of their councilwoman. The daughter, who is "artistic" and not particularly interested in government, nevertheless passes around clippings about her mother to anyone who is handy. And Mr. Earle thoroughly approved of his spouse's civic doings, even though he was a "passionate Republican" and she is Republican only when Republicanism means anti-Tammanyism. Mrs. Earle "tries not to cheat her family," and she does it simply by getting up early and going to bed late.

She makes no bones about the minor domestic abilities, however—she simply doesn't have them. She tells about the reporter who came to get a story about her as a mother and a housewife, and wanted a picture of her "doing something domestic." He suggested she sit on a couch knitting.

"But I can't knit."

Could she cook?

"Not a lick."

At last, in desperation, she rushed to the telephone and said brightly, "I shall telephone to the grocer and order some groceries!"

They finally compromised on a dusting scene, with Mrs. Earle using a damask napkin as a rather unorthodox dustcloth.

What is the compulsion that sent this gently bred daughter of well-to-do parents, wife of a well-to-do husband, into the fierce materialistic battles of New York City politics? That is a second question which comes readily to anyone who has observed the vast majorities of comfortably situated women who do *not* go into politics, New York City or otherwise.

There may be a Freudian answer, but Mrs. Earle is so splendidly extroverted a woman that if such an answer exists it is well hidden. The reason she herself gives is that she has been interested in politics ever since she can remember; and that she was brought up with a lot of boys, so that no rough and tumble ever dismayed her. That interest in politics she modifies now, in the light of a maturer understanding, into an interest in government, with a

secondary concern with politics merely in so far as politics are a tool to good government.

She believes deeply in the rôle of women in shaping good government. Not that she is a feminist.

"I'm not proud of what women do; I'm proud of what they could do. They could do at least as much as men, but not necessarily better than men."

Women are still the leisure class, philosophizes Mrs. Earle. Each woman could easily devote valuable time to civic activities. Moreover, women are not yet rutted into party lines, as are their men; they are psychologically readier to think independently. And finally, women are naturally conservators; as they become more and more aware of the effects of government (which are these days becoming more and more obvious) they will pitch in to help as naturally as they warm the baby's bottle.

WHY NOT OTHERS?

Although she would prefer to be simply another councilman, Mrs. Earle feels strongly the glare of the spotlight on the only woman member of the council—the first woman member. When she speaks, her hearers assume that all women speak. What she does is blamed on the whole feminine tribe. To Mrs. Earle this is a grave responsibility, and she tries hard to be better than herself, for the sake of the women whom she hopes will follow in her place. (She is a little resentful that they do not follow more quickly.)

But Mrs. Earle's political life is not simply a product of an officious notion that women ought to have as much to say as men in the running of government. The feminine angle is the smallest part of a full-fledged philosophy which has sent her into so many activities, all of them constructive. The epitome of what government means she sees in the New York City tax bill, on the back of which is a breakdown of the city budget. She points out a $100,000,000 item for education. Compare that with the sums privately spent for education! Another $200,000,000 for social welfare purposes of all kinds. Compare that with privately administered funds for social welfare! In other words, private activities for the common good are dwarfed by the towering activities of government. If government isn't as good as it can be, how can we hope for good in any other field?

She sees as the primary task of a citizens' party the dramatization of government so that even the most unimaginative may realize how stupendous a job is to be done by city hall.

"The other day, as I was walking across town, I realized what tremendous changes have taken place in the past seven years," she commented. (The calendar of a good New York City progressive always identifies 1933, the first year of LaGuardia, as A.D. 1.) "For instance, the trolleys are almost all gone and buses have taken their place! We take so much for granted, we forget so much. There are probably many people who think things have always been this way.

(Continued on page 631)

Plea for an Informed Citizenry

States should follow lead of the cities in making available concise, readable reports on all phases of activity; such important matters as state finances, voting statistics, and accomplishments of various departments should be easily accessible.

By JAMES K. POLLOCK
University of Michigan

WE ARE beginning to realize and to emphasize that our democracy must be properly informed if it is to function intelligently on public questions. Too much of our public action has been decided "by guess or by God." Many important public questions have been decided by small minorities because majorities have not been informed.

It is interesting to study the voting participation on initiative and referendum issues in the states having these institutions and to see how voters refuse to express an opinion on questions about which they have not been informed. Large areas of our public are not exposed to any regular kind of information service on governmental questions, and even in elections where issues are on the ballot we have done next to nothing to give voters factual information.

In initiative and referendum states —of which there are thirteen with the constitutional initiative, nineteen with the statutory initiative, and twenty-one with the statutory referendum—only ten use so-called publicity pamphlets to inform the voters on issues pending for decision. This minimum effort on the part of the state is very inadequate; it provides the voters with the official texts of the measures and only occasionally with arguments pro and con. These pamphlets are not factual; they do not contain all the information necessary to enable the voter to make up his mind with a full knowledge of the facts; and they are very frequently so unattractive and unimportant looking that they are promptly thrown into the waste basket.

For very small sums of money initiative and referendum states can solve this problem of informing the voters on measures submitted for acceptance or rejection. For a penny a pamphlet a state could inform its voters in an adequate manner, and thus raise the intelligence level of the voting population.

In the larger and more detailed field of administrative information—of information about the hundred different services and activities performed by the average state—the citizen is indeed hungry or starved. Even in the field of public finance the most elementary facts about the state budget are frequently not immediately available to interested citizens. Many political campaigns are fought on the issue of state finance, with the contending candidates asserting figures which may be millions of dollars apart.

When it comes to problems of unemployment, public health, crime, libraries, and securities, it is often

with the utmost difficulty that interested citizens are able to secure necessary information. In the matter of voting statistics, although all states publish some kind of manual which contains pages of election returns, in only a few states is it possible to learn the number of registered voters.

INFORM THE CITIZEN

Should it not be possible for the average gum-chewing citizen to learn with the utmost ease whether his state is in the red or in the black, and whether the voters participate well or poorly in elections? If we can spend considerable sums to help the resort areas of the state attract tourists, and to help the American Legion and the DAR to have their state conventions, why can we not make available in attractive and useful form all the relevant facts about the major activities of government?

As it is at present, highway and conservation departments are quite well organized to hand out publicity about their achievements and services. One could wish that equally important state services, such as health and education, social security, and law enforcement, might be able to afford the publicity men who are present in only a few of the better organized departments. The casual nature of state reports, their personal or partisan bias, their incomplete coverage, their unattractiveness, not to mention their inadequacies, may well cause believers in an informed citizenry to wail and gnash their teeth.

If we are convinced of the need of more public information, what should be done to achieve a proper result? First of all, there should be in every state government a centralized control over all reports and all expenditures for publicity. In this way, as in Massachusetts, uniformity and adequacy can be enforced. Instead of allowing a department to spend as much money for publicity as its own budget permits, a central office of finance and administration could require an even and fair allocation for publicity purposes to all departments.

PUBLICITY FUNDS NEEDED

In the second place, simply because there are no pressure groups insisting on expenditures for information, we have found great reductions made in recent years in the funds allocated for this purpose. Considerable increases in funds for informational purposes would do much to improve the democratic process.

In the third place, serious attention should be given to supplying the general public not with a four-hundred-page book of figures, but rather with a set of simple, clear, attractive five- or ten-page pamphlets which summarize essential facts for the average citizen.

Reports should be in two forms. A complete report should be available to agencies and individuals who will make use of its great detail. But more important, a second type of government report should be prepared for general public distribution in brief form. Such reports for the average citizen should be prepared with all the modern devices for conveying information such as pictograms and tabular devices. They

should be prepared by persons trained in such matters and not by broken-down politicians or newspapermen. They should appear at regular intervals and not just before an election to help out a candidate who is up for re-election.

Until state and local governments give adequate attention to these vital problems of public information, it will be very inaccurate to refer to our people as an informed democracy. The progress which has been made in the field of municipal reporting can be duplicated in other fields if we insist upon it. Otherwise we might as well admit that democratic government is run by default and ignorance.

Editor's Note.—Paper read at Citizens Conference on Government, Estes Park, Colorado, June 28, 1940.

ST. LOUIS STRUGGLES

(Continued from page 578)

to time thereafter. Repeatedly, for years, the voters have rejected proposals to issue bonds for a new structure, even when the PWA was prepared to pay a large share of the cost. In part this attitude was due perhaps to mistrust of some of the county officials, but there have been strong signs that later defeats were due, to considerable extent, to the feeling that the county and city were destined to get together again, obviating the need. The courthouse has been criticised by grand juries for years as a firetrap and the city government of Clayton has condemned its oldest section, so that postal carriers no longer deliver mail there.

Traveling out from the city into the county in any direction, it takes a trained eye to discern any difference. Physically and socially the community is one; politically it is a long divorced couple, often forgetting good manners to snarl on meeting.

In the mushroom development of suburbs there is serious danger of an early re-creation of the blight which has hurt the city. As a striking example stands the fact that many new subdivisions were laid out with tiny lots, where light and air and privacy will soon be at a premium—paradoxically in a district where there is still plenty of land.

Together the city and the suburban area of the county have a population now slightly in excess of a million, constituting what really is one urban region which would rank sixth among American cities—behind Detroit and Los Angeles but ahead of Cleveland and Baltimore.

The official metropolitan district, bisected by the Mississippi River, as set up by the 1930 census, consists of all but one outlying rural township of St. Louis County and takes in an adjoining county seat, St. Charles, and large portions of two Illinois counties including East St. Louis and Alton. This metropolitan district had a population of 1,293,000 in 1930 and it is apparent that completion of 1940 figures will not make a great change. Probably there will be a slight increase, but various smaller cities in the district have lost population in the decade. The St. Louis metropolitan district was eighth in the nation in 1930 and likely has not changed in rank.

Manager Plan in Connecticut Towns

Three towns and one city have taken advantage of manager legislation; change in government not difficult to attain but many communities still cling to traditional town meeting though cumbersome and antiquated.

By CARTER W. ATKINS
Hartford Governmental Research Institute, Inc.

IT WOULD seem that the simplicity by which most municipalities in Connecticut may adopt the manager form of government would have prompted many more than the present three towns and one city to give that system of government a trial. That they have not done so may be due largely to acceptance of the old habit of thinking of local government as more representative and more democratic when its affairs are administered by elective officials and a multitude of citizen boards and commissions. Certainly it appears that there is a reluctance generally to centralize administrative authority in a single official either elective or appointive.

Connecticut towns hold their town meetings traditional of the early colonial days. One who sees them in operation is led to regard them as an institution not to be thoughtlessly looked upon as a useless or undesirable activity in the conduct of local government. The town meeting represents citizen interest sometimes at its best and sometimes not, but still it is citizen participation and throughout the years has without doubt afforded opportunity to citizens to bring influence to bear upon policies affecting the administration of local affairs. Adoption of the manager form of government in Connecticut neither abolishes nor alters the situation with respect to the continuation of town meetings if the citizens desire them and they are being continued in some of those communities which have managers.

Local governmental functions in Connecticut are administered under several corporate designations including cities, towns, boroughs, villages, and special districts. One hundred sixty-nine cities and towns comprise the entire area and population of the state. Fifteen of these units are consolidated cities and towns. One hundred fifty-three are towns, and one is a consolidated town and borough.

In addition to and operating within some of the 153 towns there are six cities, eighteen boroughs, two villages and numerous school, fire, sewer, lighting, and improvement districts. Thus, in many places there are two and sometimes more than two overlapping local governments.

Uniformity of organization does not prevail among Connecticut cities and towns and there is wide variation in their administrative structure. For example, towns may operate under special charter, or under the

general town law either with or without special acts of the General Assembly pertaining to the particular town. They may or may not have a board of finance or a town council. Some have neither and others have one or the other or both, and in the absence of other provisions with respect to the administrative organization the town selectmen become the chief administrative authority.

TOWNS MAY APPOINT MANAGER

At the present time any town which operates under the general town law may of its own volition easily appoint a town manager. This is made possible by a general law passed by the General Assembly in 1917, which provides that any town having a board of finance may, at any annual or special town meeting, vote to have a town manager. Incidentally, any town may provide for the establishment of a board of finance by resolution adopted at a town meeting called for that purpose.

Following adoption at the town meeting of the resolution to appoint a town manager, the board of finance is required to nominate to the board of selectmen one or more persons for the office. The board of selectmen is required to make the appointment from the list of nominees within ten days. The law provides that the person appointed shall be "a suitable person who shall have a practical and technical knowledge of road and bridge building." He is appointed for a term of three years and his salary is fixed by the board of finance.

Although the law has been in effect since 1917, only one town has appointed a manager under its provisions. That appointment was made in the town of Killingly last year. Killingly has an estimated population of slightly more than 9,000. The town has no town council and no special charter so that the manager assumes the duties performed by the town selectmen except those pertaining to the making of voters. A borough government also operates within the town, independently of the town government.

The three other local governments which have appointed managers do not operate under the general town law but instead have obtained special charters through the General Assembly. Each has a city or town council but the governmental organization differs as between each community.

West Hartford was the first town in Connecticut to adopt the manager plan. West Hartford is a high-type residential community adjoining the city of Hartford and is one of the most rapidly growing communities in the state. The manager plan became effective in 1919, at which time the population of the town was approximately 8,800. Today the population is estimated to be nearly 34,000. At the time the first manager was appointed the town had no council but a council was established by charter provision some two years later.

During the period from 1919 to 1935 there was persistent encroachment on the manager's functions resulting from creation of boards and

commissions which assumed the supervisory and administrative duties of most of the town's operating departments. The manager, therefore, became manager largely in name only. That condition was changed in 1936, however, as the result of adoption of a new charter by the General Assembly at the town's request. Most of the administrative boards were abolished and the town since then has operated under a council-manager plan. The citizens generally seem to like this form of government. The tax rate is relatively low and one hears the opinion expressed frequently that the town is well managed and efficiently operated.

The city of New London and the town of Stratford adopted the manager plan in 1921. In both communities the plan was established by special charter passed by the General Assembly. Incidentally, there is no distinction in Connecticut between cities and towns with respect to their functions of government. A town becomes a city if it chooses to designate itself a city in its charter. New London has a population of approximately 30,000 and the population of Stratford is estimated to be approximately 22,000.

The tax rate in these two communities is 28½ and 28 mills respectively as compared with 19 mills in West Hartford. Tax rates are of little value, however, for comparative purposes either as between manager towns or as between other towns. A considerable variation in governmental organization and functions, as well as the inclusion of special taxing districts, precludes the possibility of making valid statistical comparisons. Any attempt to measure the effectiveness of the manager plan in those communities would necessitate a careful analysis of the precise structure of their governments and an evaluation of the number and extent of the services rendered before and after the manager plan became effective.

FURTHER TRIAL NEEDED

It appears that the manager plan has not been given a sufficiently adequate test in Connecticut to afford a demonstration of its maximum possibilities under the best form of council-manager charter. Too many variations from the plan of centralized authority for all administrative functions appear to have been adopted in the organizational set-up in those towns which have managers. Perhaps in time communities which are ready to adopt the manager plan will be willing to discard more of the old methods and accept all of the best known principles of council-manager charters. Perhaps, too, when they have adopted the best possible charter they will insist their charter be made to work to the fullest possible extent.

As to the outlook, there appears to be no great degree of activity which would lead to a rapid increase in the number of manager towns and cities in the near future.

In Waterbury, the fourth largest municipality in the state, the citizens voted down the manager plan last year but observers have expressed the opinion that the outcome of the election was due to factors other than

(Continued on page 610)

Detroit's Police Merit Board

Activities of special commission recently set up to select recruits and recommend promotions and retirements still in experimental stage; hold promise of a satisfactory solution of merit problems involved.

By JOHN R. SEARLES
Detroit Bureau of Governmental Research

WHEN Detroit recently experienced some difficulties in controlling police personnel, it struck out to solve these problems with a new type of civil service, which reverses some of the trends of present-day municipal merit systems. The Police Merit Board establishes a principle of regulation which is applicable not only to police and fire departments, but to other departments of government in which there are a number of technical positions.

Until 1939 the management of police personnel in Detroit was strictly a departmental matter, subject only to broad charter requirements that police officers be citizens, be able to speak English, and be promoted on the basis of seniority.[1] Until 1930 there was little public dissatisfaction with the personnel procedures employed. During the 1920's, under progressive police commissioners and superintendents, the selection and promotion of police officers was usually on a practical basis of merit and it was a common practice for the older officers to serve far beyond the minimum twenty-five years required for retirement on pension. With the exception of the Army Alpha Intelligence Test for recruits, no written tests were given. The merit principle was not formalized by city ordinance, charter provision, or rules of the police department.[2]

With a change of administration after 1930, a number of superior officers who had served their required twenty-five years were forced by implied threat of demotion to retire. Under the present Detroit police pension plan, an officer is retired on a pension amounting to one-half his last annual salary. Demotion is, therefore, an extremely severe penalty to an older officer. But such sweeping retirements without adequate explanation caused an unfavorable reaction—which eventually subsided when a new administration took office.

After 1934 forced retirements and extremely rapid promotions again became common. They reached a cli-

[1]The charter provision states that "the officer . . . having served the longest period in any position shall be advanced to fill any vacany in the next higher position, if he shall have the qualifications thereof." (Title IV, chapter XXI, section 14). The last clause has been interpreted by the Corporation Counsel and the Police Department to empower the department to determine the qualifications of each candidate for promotion. This interpretation effectually nullified the seniority clause.

[2]For procedure used in selection of police officers in Detroit prior to 1939 see, *Experiments in the Mental Testing of Detroit Policemen*, by John R. Searles and J. M. Leonard, published by the Detroit Bureau of Governmental Research, November 1936.

max in January 1939, when a large number of ranking officers were retired, some of whom had only recently been promoted. Public resentment this time found voice in an amendment to the city charter, approved by the voters on April 3, 1939.

MERIT BOARD AMENDMENT

The charter amendment established the Detroit Police Merit Board composed of the superintendent of police, the executive of Wayne University, and a representative chosen by the Civil Service Commission.[3]

The usual practice in American cities is to transfer all police personnel administration to a local or state civil service commission—of thirty-five larger cities twenty-seven or 77 per cent use an existing civil service agency which is also the selective agency for other city employees. Jurisdiction, however, varies in these systems and sometimes includes control over discipline and promotions. There is an apparent tendency to consider existing civil service agencies as all-encompassing devices to handle personnel problems of all sorts, shapes, and sizes.

There were several considerations which prompted the use of a separate police personnel agency in Detroit. In the first place, a corporation counsel's opinion, holding a twenty-year-old decision of the Michigan Supreme Court still binding, prevented the Detroit Civil Service Commission from taking jurisdiction over the police and health departments and the courts as they are state agencies. While a statute could obviate the difficulty, the Detroit charter provisions governing the Civil Service Commission were not considered adequate for the Police Department.

For instance, the Detroit commission does not have jurisdiction over promotions and retirements, and abuse of these functions was the basis of public resentment over present police practices. The continuing wail of every police commissioner that he did not have a uniformly satisfactory force of ranking officers indicated clearly that only constant effort to improve the type of officer promoted from the lowest ranks would secure ranking officers of superior ability.

Discipline was another barrier. The Detroit Civil Service Commission has full control over discipline of all employees, even including dismissals after the probationary period. A department has some slight powers of suspension for minor difficulties, but the commission retains full rights to determine sufficient grounds for dismissals. However, a police department which has not full powers over the discipline of its members can never be more than partially efficient. Further, through all the attacks on promotions and dismissals, the Police Trial Board, composed of three members—the superintendent and the heads of the uniform and the detective divisions—has received only minor criticism.

Also, the "rule of one" was a hindrance. The Detroit commission

[3]The Detroit Civil Service Commission, covered by the charter, recruits and disciplines all municipal employees except those of the police and health departments and of the traffic and felony courts. It does not have control over salary standardization or retirements and only slight control over promotions.

must certify the one highest ranking person on an eligible list, and with police testing techniques being what they are, this is an impossible provision. If the Police Department is to be held accountable for the action of its men, it must have the widest latitude in appointing power.

SPECIAL TREATMENT NEEDED

A further and more fundamental consideration concerned the efficacy of current civil service techniques as applied to police personnel. Police officers present a special group, distinct from other administrative employees, in that their qualifications cannot be gauged by established measurements. Although simple objective minimum qualifications have been established for police officers, no objective techniques for measuring future success in police work have yet been devised. Not only would the application of the unfamiliar civil service testing techniques be resented by the older police officers, but due to lack of known valid tests for police officers, such application might defeat the merit principle itself.

The Police Merit Board was designed to meet these objections. The board has as its chairman the superintendent of police, who is directly responsible to, and appointed by, the commissioner. The other two, representing the public, are non-political and unpaid members but experienced in personnel administration. These two represent divergent schools of personnel administration. The executive of Wayne University, a division of the Board of Education, customarily appoints and promotes employees of that institution on the basis of merit, not determined by formal testing procedures; the appointee of the Civil Service Commission is schooled in formal testing techniques.

The work of the merit board is divided into two fields. The first relates to the preparation of eligible lists of candidates for appointment and for promotion. While these lists must be prepared in rank order, the police commissioner can make appointments from the lists anywhere according to his pleasure. Thus, the more common civil service rules of certifying one or three, is replaced by giving full latitude to the commissioner to make the best appointments possible from a group of candidates all of whom are considered able, although in a varying degree. The procedure to be used in preparing the eligible lists and the number of names to appear on them is left to the discretion of the merit board, although this is not as serious as it appears since the superintendent of the Police Department serves as chairman. Civilian employees of the department are also included under the merit board but only "until such time as they shall become civil service employees in the classified civil service."

The second activity relates to retirement. Undoubtedly there were unjustified retirements in the past. But at the same time, there was no desire to restrict the commissioner in his power to retire men who were no longer of value to the department. Thus, the merit board acts more as a public forum in retirements than as an agency for absolute authority.

The Police Department recognizes two types of retirements—voluntary, after twenty-five years of police service, and involuntary, where the officer retires prior to twenty-five years service because of sickness or injury. In both cases, the officer appears before the merit board, is questioned as to his service record, reasons for retirement, and other pertinent facts. The board then reports to the commissioner whether in its opinion the retirement is justified. Regardless of action by the board, however, the commissioner may retire the officer thirty days later. The only control is the publicity which would attend an unexplained dismissal.

The entire purpose of the merit board amendment is to dignify the personnel procedures in the Police Department and to give the public an opportunity to see the back-stage action. There are no separate employees of the merit board—they are all a part of the Police Department. The board has no control over the activities of the police commissioner, he is clearly responsible for all the officers who are employed by the department. The board simply aids in sorting out from a group of recruits or candidates for promotion those whom they believe most capable. Its sole power is the ability to focus publicity if the procedure goes wrong, and if the public is indifferent it is the public's police department after all.

Naturally, it is too soon to appraise fairly the work of the merit board, but from activities in its first nine months of existence it may be possible to indicate some of the changes it is creating in the management of police personnel. To date, nine promotional examinations have been given and two eligible lists prepared.[4] Seven eligible lists are in the process of preparation. The board has recommended to the commissioner over forty voluntary and over twenty involuntary retirements in nine months of operation.

MERIT BOARD IN OPERATION

As yet no action has been taken on recruiting, training, or appointment, nor have any promotions been made from the eligible lists submitted.

The rules and regulations of the board are still informal, as the procedures employed thus far have been to a large extent experimental, pending formulation of a definite code after more experience.

The application of testing methods to promotions made the merit board far more vulnerable to criticism than would the mere testing of recruits. One common departmental practice precluded by the establishment of the merit board was the distribution of promotions as rewards for single instances of outstanding or widely publicized work, such as the apprehension of a notorious criminal. Members of the department have well established opinions of their fellow officers and of those that deserve

[4]The examinations given have been for lieutenant in the Accident Prevention Bureau, sergeant in the Accident Prevention Bureau, detective inspector, detective lieutenant, detective sergeant, detective, uniform inspector, uniform lieutenant, uniform sergeant. Eligible lists have been prepared for the two ranks in the Accident Prevention Bureau.

promotions. Recruits, on the other hand, are an unknown quantity. The merit board, however, had no choice but to meet the task confronting it and prepare eligible lists for promotion.

The examinations were announced by departmental order. Announcements described the method of filing applications, minimum requirements in terms of years of service in a particular rank, and the weighting to be given to various sections of the procedure. The written examination has been weighted from 50 to 60 per cent; training and experience from 10 to 20 per cent; the oral examination from 10 to 20 per cent; and the service (efficiency) rating, 10 to 20 per cent.[5] One-half of one per cent for every year of service in the department with a maximum of 6 per cent was added to the final score. No veterans' preference was allowed. All properly filed applications from officers who met the minimum requirements were accepted.

About 75 per cent of the officers eligible took the written examination, which resulted in giving the examination for uniform sergeant to 1,100 patrolmen.

Written tests were difficult to prepare as there was little experience to serve as a guide. The board wished to test the officer's knowledge of modern police technique as applied in Detroit, his knowledge of rules and regulations, and such other information as is considered essential for an officer to have. By and large, tests had to be as practical as possible in order to avert too much criticism. They had to be worded in the language of the Detroit police officers—it is doubtful if standardized tests will ever solve the problem of police examination techniques.

TESTS GIVEN

Several thousand short-answer type of questions were prepared by the merit board's staff in the Police Training School with some assistance from the Detroit Bureau of Governmental Research. From these questions the examinations were compiled. Tests were constructed in sections, and, where possible, were made progressive. For example, candidates for all ranks of detective took parts of the same examination at a single time. The parts were as follows:

Section	*Subject*
Test 1	General adaptability
Test 2	Department procedure—rules and regulations
Test 3	Criminal law
Test 4	Evidence and court procedure
Test 5	Observation and memory
Test 6	Criminal investigation
Test 7	Reading ability (legal)
Test 8	Interview technique
Test 9	Supervisory duties
Test 10	Personnel administration

The examination for detective embraced Tests 1 through 7; for detective-sergeant, Tests 1 through 8; for detective-lieutenant, Tests 1 through 9; and for detective-inspector, the entire battery. Not only is this progressive test easy and cheap to administer, but it permits a comparison of scores between different ranks.

The sections of the examination

[5]The merit board has not been unanimous upon these weights, but they were tried out in these first promotional examinations. The general feeling is that the written examination should not constitute over 50 per cent of the total, perhaps less.

listed above and the sections of the other examinations tend to fall into two groups. One group, Tests 2, 3, 4, 6, and 8 of the various detective examinations, seeks to measure the acquired learning of the police officer. The other group, Tests, 1, 5, 7, and 9, is designed to discover, in police language, the adaptability and general intelligence of the officer. The last test, on personnel administration, was a long answer or essay type of test which proved to be of little significance. The complete batteries of tests in each examination contained between 500 and 600 questions and were administered in from four to six hours, which proved to be ample time for the majority of candidates.

The written examinations were scored and weighted, and a score determined by inspection which would permit from 20 to 35 per cent of the candidates to pass, depending upon the ratio of the number of candidates to vacancies. These scores were reduced to a scale based on a passing score of 70 per cent, although this was not necessary.

The training and experience of all candidates scoring above 70 were carefully rated, with due consideration to education and in-service training. Efficiency or service ratings were secured, using the Detroit form which is a modern type of ten-point profile rating developed by Dr. S. E. Haven of Wayne University. This work was exploratory for the Detroit department and there has been some criticism as to the methods used. As in other parts of the process, the eligibility score was 70 per cent.

The oral interview administered by ranking police officers, proved the weakest from a scoring standpoint, principally due to lack of experience on the part of the examiners and the usual police difficulties with "halo" complexes. This part of the examination was controlled by the Police Department, the merit board accepting its reports without much question. The qualities which go to make up a good police officer have so far resisted the efforts of the written examination technique. While the oral examination might do injustice to a police officer, the matter can be corrected by the commissioner who may select appointments from anywhere on an eligible list.

The final score was computed on the basis of 100, although this has serious disadvantages. To the final score was added the percentage for seniority, and the eligible list prepared. Any candidate who failed to attain a score of 70 in the various major parts of the examination procedure was disqualified.

So far, eligible lists have been prepared only for the rank of sergeant and lieutenant in the Accident Prevention Bureau. The ratio of eligible candidates to vacancies in these classes is about ten to one and two to one. No promotions have been made or seem likely to be made in the next few months.

CONCLUSION

The procedures employed have been experimental, but they have produced much data for further study. Except in the size of the eligible list in relation to the number of vacancies and the use of "police"

language in the written test, the techniques used were little different from those employed by public personnel agencies. Other practices, especially adapted to police work, seem likely to be instituted.

The reaction of officers to the new order is mixed but, as no appointments have been made, not violent. Informed opinion in the department indicates that the men most deserving of promotion in the Accident Prevention Bureau appear high on the eligible list. There is no doubt that the merit board has proved an adequate check on unwarranted forced retirements. This single action is perhaps worth more to the Police Department in building up public confidence than is now realized.

Gradual education of the public to condemn any personnel system which is not based on open-window methods and in which the interested citizen does not have a ring-side seat to witness the process, should force police and other similar departments to adopt a merit system which will be suited to their particular purposes. It is idle to think it can be grafted on an existing civil service system without many adjustments. It is likewise idle to believe that it can be so loose as to approve everything the police administration wishes. There must be some type of system which gives large discretion to the chief administrator and yet provides sufficient control to protect public interest regardless of the march of police commissioners through office.

ALLEGHENY COUNTY

(Continued from page 584)

have saved the bill. At the first crack of the gun, proportional representation was eliminated and, like ten pins, other features of the bill began to fall. Finally, the deadline passed and the backers of the emasculated bill sought to introduce it through the Senate which has no deadline. Someone, however, reckoned without the host, for not a single Democratic or Republican senator could be found to introduce the bill.

The violent opposition of the third-class cities had had its effect, and this last and latest effort of the metropolitan idea joined with the others in the limbo of lost causes.

Lost though the efforts may have been, they have been neither forlorn nor barren of hope. One may say with assurance that the charter idea has merely gone into winter quarters. At this writing many of the former workers for consolidation are at work again, supporting a bipartisan "home rule" campaign to permit referendum reforms of municipal governmental structure without specific state legislative action.

As someone has remarked: "Truly, the misfortunes of this movement for a well tailored government to clothe Allegheny County with a garment in keeping with its social and economic stature would satisfy the demands which old-time drama made in the way of trials and tribulations encountered by the hero of the piece."

The search for the happy ending, fortunately, goes forward.

Watchdogs for the Treasury

Budgeting, auditing, and reporting three important devices by which Mr. and Mrs. John Q. Citizen may be kept informed as to the stewardship of their public servants in dispensing government funds.

By LLOYD MOREY, Comptroller,
University of Illinois

GOVERNMENT, as I conceive it, is a coöperative agency in which certain persons, elected, appointed, or otherwise employed for various duties and responsibilities, carry on sundry activities on behalf of and in the interest of their fellow-citizens. The latter are, in effect, the owners and employers in this great enterprise. Officials and employees are but servants and trustees. It is the responsibility of the latter to follow the wishes of the owners, protect their interests, and keep them informed of the results.

Democratic government depends for its continuation on an active, well informed citizenry. All too often citizens abdicate their dutiful interest in government and thus open the way for misuse of governmental powers. "It should never be forgotten," says the National Municipal League,[1] "that in the final analysis it is always the good citizen who is responsible for bad government. Those who are interested in bad government are ever alert and on the job. Those who are interested in good government must take the time and make the effort necessary to mobilize their own strength."

Governmental officials and employees depend for success in the public affairs for which they assume responsibility on the interest and support of the citizens they serve. Unless that interest is fostered and maintained, the financial resources as well as the moral backing so essential to carrying out a sound and comprehensive program of community life and development will not be forthcoming. Without these necessary features of support, public officials will bring discredit on themselves and their community. The never-ending problem of the public official, then, is how he can maintain and stimulate the interest of the citizen whom he serves and to whom he must account.

Three principal media are available and rather generally employed by which the citizen may express his wishes and instructions to his governmental servants. The first of these is the **ballot**. Through it the citizen first sets up in constitutions the restrictions he wishes to place on his representatives, and the scope of functions he expects them to carry out for him. He supplements this body of principles by specific judgment on certain major questions upon which he reserves the right to pass individually. Through it also he selects those to whom he is willing to entrust his government for each successive period.

Closely associated with the use of the ballot and to a certain extent depending on it, is the question of

[1] *Forms of Municipal Government*, 1939.

the qualifications of those who seek election or appointment to public positions carrying financial responsibility. All too often little or no attention has been paid to this phase of public organization. Adequate training in law, medicine, architecture, or engineering has generally been recognized as essential for positions in these fields of work. The same cannot yet be said as to accounting.

This is the reason why the American Institute of Accountants not long ago issued a statement under the title, "Qualifications for Public Fiscal Positions." It called upon public officials and public bodies to insist on such standards in keeping with the varying requirements of the different positions in question. It called upon citizens to use every means to obtain "the election or appointment of only qualified persons to positions carrying responsibility of an accounting nature." It vigorously condemned the election or appointment to any such position on "a partisan political basis without regard for technical qualifications."

The next mechanism through which the citizen may exercise at least a measure of control is the **budget**. The budget presents the proposed expenditures for a succeeding fiscal period, and the proposed means of financing them. Here the citizen may see what his official representatives propose to do, and what will be the effect on his pocketbook. If he avails himself of the opportunity, he can have much influence on what the budget contains. Most public bodies are required by law to prepare and adopt an annual budget.

The majority of public bodies provide for ample publicity concerning their annual budgets, both through newspaper accounts and through public hearings. All too frequently, however, citizen interest in such proceedings is a negligible factor. Frequently the only attention given is by representatives of some association interested only in reducing taxes at any cost, or in the efforts of some corporation to get its own taxes reduced.

CONSIDERING THE BUDGET

The time to lock the stable is before the horse is stolen. The proper time to take out fire insurance is before there is a fire. The time to check on public expenditures is before the obligations are incurred, in other words, before the budget is passed. If the citizen feels that his government is costing too much, the time to say so is when the tax and appropriation laws and ordinances are under consideration. If he feels that his representatives are not providing adequately for the services he wishes, the time to say so is when the financial program for the ensuing period is under consideration.

The citizen has the means, through the opportunity given for public discussion of the budgets of the various governmental bodies in which he is concerned, of checking on the programs and policies of those bodies as expressed in these documents. It is his right and his responsibility to take advantage of this opportunity, and if he does not do so, he has little right to complain of the results.

In this connection, attention may well be called to the need of better

coördination in the taxing and spending programs of various local agencies. In most communities sundry independent bodies are set up to carry out different functions. These bodies frequently levy taxes on the same property and serve the same group of citizens. In few cases, however, do any means exist whereby the financial programs of these various agencies may be reviewed in a central and unified manner. A local citizens' advisory committee has effectively filled such a deficiency in a number of places. It reviews the financial programs of every tax-spending body in the community and expresses an independent judgment on each and on the entire picture. Only by such a procedure can there be an appraisal of the combined budgets and tax levies on the taxpayers.

SOUND AUDITING

The third device on which the public may depend for control over the acts of its governmental officials is the **audit**. It represents a plan of verification of the correctness of the financial records and reports, the fidelity of management, and the adequacy and soundness of procedure. The citizen should make sure that provision for independent audit exists in every governmental body, and that the conditions under which it is set up and carried out are such as to insure the proper results.

Here again the procedure has often not been such as to secure competent and comprehensive service, and the public has failed to get what it has every right to expect. Two conditions have contributed to this state of affairs: the first is failure of many accountants to acquaint themselves with the peculiar problems to be found in audits of governmental bodies, with the result that their reports have at times not been of such form and character as to be serviceable to officials or informative to the public; the other is the practice of many local governments of calling for competitive bids on audits, and awarding contracts for this service to the lowest bidders, without regard to qualifications or scope of program.

No adequate excuse any longer exists for either of these conditions. Through the work of the National Committee on Municipal Accounting, standard practices in municipal accounting and auditing have been prescribed with which any competent accountant can readily acquaint himself, and which he may follow with confidence. As to engagement of auditors, the movement away from the competitive bid system, both within and without the profession, grows steadily, and it is reasonable to believe that the day is not far distant when it will have completely disappeared.

If, perchance, a government decides to set up its own system of auditing and its own organization, let it see to it that the conditions are identical with those which should be imposed upon outside auditors.

The connecting link between the budget and the audit is the **accounting system**. In one sense it is the most important part of the cycle, for it is here that the results of the budget operations are recorded and where

the information so necessary for guidance in administrative and legislative decisions is found. In another sense, however, accounting is but a means to an end, that end being the production of information concerning financial operations and conditions.

"Informative accounting is the light by which the path of public administration is illuminated. The only hope that we can have for an interest in the administration of public affairs by the body politic is to keep that light burning brightly. The keeper of the light must never sleep, for, notwithstanding the fact that the public seems at times totally indifferent to the administration of its affairs, it nevertheless is true that an informed person will ask questions. He will want to know the reason why. Accounting tells the reason why."[2]

ADEQUATE REPORTING

How may public officials inform their superiors—both legislators and citizens—concerning the activities over which they have been given charge, and make to them an accounting of their stewardship? The primary means upon which an official must rely for these purposes is a system of **reports**. "The old idea that the public should be kept in ignorance," says Roger S. Baldwin,[3] "is no longer popular. There is a growing interest on the part of the public in its own business, and an increasing desire for information. The annual report of a municipality is one of the most effective methods of spreading information with respect to its activities."

With respect to those for whom reports are intended, and the purposes they are to serve, there are two kinds of reports: (1) those prepared primarily for the information of administrative and executive officials, department heads, and members of the legislative or governing body; (2) those prepared and issued primarily for the information and use of the public.

The former, of course, must be frequent and detailed. The latter, while covering much of the information also supplied for internal use and reference, necessarily must be compact and readily understood, and hence contain more explanatory material. With respect to the scope and content of reports, there are also two kinds: first, the general report, covering more or less fully the activities of all departments; second, the financial report, dealing only with financial matters.

There are many ways in which information concerning governmental activities may be presented to the public. An inquiry made by *Public Management*[4] revealed the following methods used by various city officials as being most important, listed in the approximate order of importance: newspapers, talks before civic groups, annual reports, radio talks, exhibits and demonstrations, monthly bulletins. Certainly all of these have their place in a complete program of public information.

[2]From address of T. Coleman Andrews at Municipal Accounting Clinic, San Francisco, American Institute of Accountants, September 1939.

[3]*Municipal Reporting*, 1937.

[4]October 1934.

Undoubtedly the **press** forms the best medium for reaching the largest number of citizens most frequently. The important thing is that material given the press is in such form that it will be correctly interpreted.

How many times officials as well as the public are fooled into complacency by a heading such as this one that appeared in a local paper not so many months ago: "City balances $137,342, Clerk Tells Council." But let us investigate. The body of the report says: "Combined city funds contain balances of $137,342." A little farther on also appears this significant statement: "The balance in the regular general corporate fund of the city [which is the fund out of which the bulk of the current operation expense of the city government must be paid] is $87.77." Against it there were $43,100 of outstanding anticipation warrants! This is the kind of report that fails to emphasize the differentiation between funds so essential in public business.

An alert city administration will not sit back and wait for press representatives to pry news loose, or to get their own information their own way. It will aid these persons in getting worthwhile information and especially will see that a correct understanding of technical data is made possible.

Talks before groups of citizens, as well as over the radio, by public officials have a very definite place in public enlightenment on governmental problems. Their effectiveness depends much on the way in which the material is presented and the ability of the individuals as public speakers. For this reason these methods are not universally applicable, but they should be made use of wherever possible. If discussion can take the turn of a forum in which questions from those present can be offered and answered, the usefulness of the plan is greatly increased.

Some cities print monthly **bulletins** giving brief reports of current condition and progress. They have the advantage of keeping civic problems before the public in a continuous way. As the Urbanism Committee of the National Resources Committee says, "The need for adequate municipal reporting does not arise once a year and then die down till the next annual report must be prepared. Continuous interpretations and explanations of municipal activities in the public press and radio are as much needed by our cities as by the private enterprises that originated public relation techniques."[5]

ANNUAL REPORT IMPORTANT

In many ways, however, the most important report of any governmental body or official is the **annual report.** This is true because it is in this document that all of the things which have happened during the year and which may have been reported individually at various times and in various ways during the year are recorded in a comprehensive and permanent manner. It is here that the record of accomplishment is presented over against the plan of operation and development offered in the budget at

[5]Report of Committee, 1939, U. S. Government Printing Office.

the beginning of the year. It is through this medium that other cities and agencies are given an opportunity to view and study what each has accomplished. It is a document that the citizen may peruse at his leisure and in which he should be able to secure a complete picture of the affairs in which he is interested.

A most excellent guide as to what the general annual report of a city as well as other public bodies should contain is found in a booklet of the International City Managers' Association[6] recently issued, entitled, *Specifications for the Annual Municipal Report*. It outlines quite completely the most effective qualities of general city reports, and gives many illustrations taken from actual publications. It contains valuable suggestions as to content, form, and style. It is worthy of the serious study of every public executive.

REPORTING ON FINANCE

The financial data which such a report contains, however, must necessarily be limited. For that reason, there is a definite place for a separate **financial report** covering such operations in a more complete manner. Even if such a report is not to be published for general circulation, it should be prepared and made available for public examination, and a digest of it should be offered to the press or otherwise published.

The National Committee on Municipal Accounting has provided a most excellent outline of what an annual financial report should contain, in its volume *Municipal Accounting Statements*. This volume contains a list of the essential financial statements for such a report, and suggested forms for such statements. It also contains approved definitions of terms to be used in such statements.

Many cities have found the path of good reporting methods. However, despite the showing that could be made in this respect and the great increase in recent years in the number of cities making reports of one kind or another, a great proportion of our cities, both large and small, and of other governmental units as well, still fail to recognize the value of this phase of administrative procedure.

The responsibility for improving this condition is upon the public official. He is the accountable agent in governmental activities. His business it is to see that accurate and understandable information is supplied promptly and regularly for the activities in his domain. To the extent that he meets this responsibility he aids in making government achieve more fully its fundamental objectives —the welfare and happiness of its citizens.

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[6] 1313 E. 60th St., Chicago.

Editor's Note.—From address before Conference on Governmental Accounting, December 1, 1939, Detroit, Michigan.

Contributors in Review

YOU made me what I am today," the St. Louis Bureau of Municipal Research might well say to **Carter W. Atkins** (*Manager Plan in Connecticut Towns*). For Mr. Atkins joined the staff of that research group at the time of its organization in 1922, was made director in 1923, and continued as director until November 1938. Now he is the first director of the Governmental Research Institute of Hartford, Connecticut. He has participated in numerous surveys, served on many official and citizen committees, and was president of the Governmental Research Association for two years.

A SPECIALIST in municipal politics, **Richard G. Baumhoff** (*St. Louis Struggles for Metropolitan Solution*) has been a reporter for the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch* for twenty-two years. He is regarded as an expert on highways, local history and politics, municipal finance, the public school system, etc. His recent study of the decay of downtown St. Louis has attracted wide attention. Carrying his interest in municipal affairs over into his personal life, Mr. Baumhoff is president of his neighborhood improvement association in University City, where he keeps a watchful eye on the community's governmental affairs.

A LEADER in civic action, **H. Marie Dermitt** (*Metropolitan Growing Pains in Allegheny County*) has served as secretary not only to the Civic Club of Allegheny County and to the National Association of Civic Secretaries, but also to a host of right-minded movements in her home area, including efforts for open air schools, education of the foreign-born, public comfort stations, public recreation, municipal band concerts, city planning, city manager, smoke abatement, metropolitan plan, building code, regulation of outdoor advertising, sewage treatment, and many, many others. In line with her chief recreation—music—Miss Dermitt initiated National Stephen C. Foster Day, celebrated on the anniversary of the composer's death.

ATTESTING the preëminence of **Lloyd Morey** (*Watchdogs for the Treasury*) as an authority on governmental accounting is the impressive roster of offices which he holds: comptroller and professor of accountancy at the University of Illinois for the past nineteen years, chairman of the American Institute of Accountants' Committee on Governmental Accounting, vice-chairman of the National Committee on Municipal Accounting. He also holds several posts of leadership in the field of educational finance. Dr. Morey is responsible for four books on accounting, including the *Manual of Municipal Accounting* and *Introduction to Governmental Accounting*. Footnote on versatility: he is also the composer of several musical works.

THE appeal of **James K. Pollock** (*Plea for an Informed Citizenry*) for the governmental enlightenment of the common man stems from his own impressive enlightenment. He has investigated political conditions, political parties and elections here and abroad, is the author of books on elections, party campaign funds, money and politics, Germany, civil service, and the political scene. Dr. Pollock has held teaching positions at Geneva College, Harvard University, Ohio State University, Stanford University, and—at present—at the University of Michigan, where he is professor of political science.

MIRIAM ROHER (*Mrs. Minority*) has been a frequent contributor to these pages —see issues of October 1939 and August 1940.

DETROIT'S police system is one of the specialties of **John R. Searles** (*Detroit's Police Merit Board*), who this year received the degree of Master of Public Administration from Wayne University. As a staff member of the Detroit Bureau of Governmental Research, Mr. Searles has assisted in the development of his city's Police Merit Board's examination program (he is author of *Experiments in the Mental Testing of Detroit Policemen*), and has had supervision of a WPA project to analyze assessed valuations by census tracts. He has also coöperated with other agencies in improving the reporting of juvenile delinquency.

EDITORIAL COMMENT

(Continued from page 574)

as the fact that professional politicians just don't like P. R. In New York, for example, Tammany longs for the "good old days" when it could have 95 to 100 per cent of the representatives instead of the exact number its voting strength warranted.

It is well to remind ourselves these days of an old tenet of democracy, that the fair representation of the people makes for strength and unity, while taxation without representation tends either to apathy or to rebellion.

In the United States we need, now more than ever, an informed, participating, responsible citizenry. The rapid extension of the use of proportional representation would do much to make all of our people feel that they have a real stake in our democratic institutions.

MANAGER PLAN IN CONNECTICUT TOWNS

(Continued from page 595)

a straight refusal of manager government. At the present time one hears the manager plan mentioned in various places and one small town is giving serious consideration to the appointment of a manager under the general town law.

Connecticut taxpayers discuss high taxes and need for economy frequently and with vehemence just as do taxpayers elsewhere. Efficiency of government has its appeal and one cannot escape the conclusion that taxpayer interest will ultimately achieve that goal under some form of local government.

The Researcher's Digest: September

Des Moines appraises relief practices elsewhere; Dayton bureau investigates "federal" and "state" aid; financial reports from Missouri and Philadelphia.

IN EVERYDAY language, the **Des Moines Bureau of Municipal Research** reports (No. 673D) on a fruitful study of relief practices which brought it sheaves of correspondence from all the large cities in the country. Taking the stand that "from successful relief practices scattered about the country, we are able to set up a pattern of practices for local application," the bureau assembled all the precedents for constructive treatment of the relief problem which "reduce the relief load and save the taxpayers money."

The bureau comments sharply: "Most agencies are doing little more than feed their relief clients. They have no systematic plans for rehabilitating them."

Ten mimeographed pages are needed to boil down the results of the survey. Then the Des Moines bureau presents a succinct page of its own recommendations for Des Moines. It asks creation of a citizens' committee representative of some fifty civic and welfare organizations, which is to sponsor and delegate to specific groups the responsibility for carrying out the following five-point program:

1. Demonstration project to illustrate the practical savings made possible by decreasing the case load per relief investigator; appraisal of relief machinery with special reference to intake department and high investigational staff turnover; consideration of possibility of city work relief as now employed by Cincinnati;

2. Vocational training plan whereby school system is geared to local employment market;

3. Development of self-help projects;

4. Development of job consciousness among employers and other citizens by, for example, a job creation contest;

5. Plans to stop influx of outsiders who will become relief clients.

Who Really Pays?

"The story of the farmer boy who works hard, so that he can go to the city and work hard, so that he can have a home in the country, is not so far fetched after all." Such is the **Dayton Research Association's** preface to a provocative bulletin (No. 86) on the real source and destination of tax money as among the various levels of government. The bureau accounts "local" taxes all those collected on the basis of income, property taxes, sales taxes, and licenses; non-popular taxes, it deems, are franchise taxes, corporation licenses, taxes on railways, light, power, and heating companies, phone, telegraph, and others for the right to conduct business, customs, interest, fees, permits, sales, royalties, etc.

Taking public welfare costs in Ohio for 1939 as an example, the report shows the disparity between the apparent division of expenses among federal, state, and local governments, and the true division as worked out by the Dayton bureau. Apparently the federal portion was 80 per cent, the state portion 15 per cent, the local portion 5 per cent. However, considering the source of the funds, the bureau maintains that the federal portion was only 6½ per cent, the state portion 7/10 per cent, and all the rest—92 4/10 per cent—came from local taxation!

Fuel for Civic Thought

Thirty-five pages of detailed descriptive tables have been issued by the **Bureau of Municipal Research of Philadelphia** to satisfy civic curiosity as to the much touted Philadelphia bonded debt. Most of the information in the report is either not available elsewhere in published form or is not conveniently available.

To satisfy similar demands, the **Governmental Research Institute of St. Louis** published a report (No. 118) on *Missouri State Finances, 1933-1940.* There are eight detailed printed pages with tables as evidence and text as interpretation.

Other contributions of the Philadelphia bureau to local good government are revealed in a modest folder, *Service Report for 1939.* The bureau was instrumental in preventing one disastrous financial proposal and in instituting three other desirable financial moves. It made studies of street-cleaning practices in other cities, in order to aid the local department. It also led civic opinion in urging improvement of waterworks practices. The bureau's director was active in development of a voluntary merit system for the employment of probation workers. These are some of the highlights of an active year, typical of the active year spent by research bureaus all over the country.

Research Bureau Reports Received

Debt

The Bonded Debt of the City of Philadelphia, May 31, 1940. Philadelphia, Bureau of Municipal Research, June 1940. 35 pp. mimeo.

Elections

Review of the 1939 Mayoralty Election. By Donald S. Hecock. Detroit, Bureau of Governmental Research, Inc., August 1, 1940. 4 pp.

Finance

Cost of Local Government (Provincial plus Municipal and School) in Canada. Citizens' Research Institute of Canada, *Canadian Taxation,* June 29, 1940. 4 pp.

Who Pays for What? Dayton Research Association, *Facts,* July 29, 1940. 2 pp. mimeo.

Missouri State Finances 1933-1940. St. Louis, Governmental Research Institute, *Mind Your Business,* July 18, 1940. 7 pp.

Highways

The Providence Highway Program 1935-1940 (Map). Providence, Governmental Research Bureau, June 1940. 1 p.

Mayors

The Mayors of Rochester. Rochester, Bureau of Municipal Research, Inc., *Municipal Research,* June 1940 and July 1940. 1 p. each.

Pensions

About Being Practical. Detroit, Bureau of Governmental Research, *Just A Second,* August 6, 1940. 2 pp. mimeo.

Public Welfare

Successful Relief Practices Elsewhere. Des Moines Bureau of Municipal Research, April 23, 1940. 11 pp. mimeo.

Research Institute

1940 Institute of Government. Seattle, Bureau of Governmental Research, University of Washington, *Washington Municipal Bulletin,* July 15, 1940. 7 pp. mimeo.

News in Review

(Continued from page 571)

Four years ago the city council rejected the petitions of this group as inadequate.

In **East Lansing, Michigan,** the manager plan is one possibility in connection with a proposed revision of the charter.

Petitions for voting on the manager plan are being circulated in **Ennis, Texas.**

In **Mill Valley, California,** a board of freeholders has been authorized by a vote of 754 to 411 to draft a new charter.

Trinidad, Colorado, is reported as showing considerable interest in the manager plan.

Dallas Enlarges Program of Citizen Action

A three-point program for informing citizens on municipal affairs has been inaugurated by Dallas, Texas, in an effort to obtain a wider spread of public education than is possible through the city's annual printed report. The International City Managers' Association reports that this includes a series of special information leaflets enclosed with water bills, a series of radio programs devoted to services of individual city departments, and a motion picture of city functions.

The leaflets are small, four-page, printed circulars, each covering a single subject on recent improvements of interest to the entire city. One such pamphlet deals with the new sewage treatment plant, and carries three pictures of plant operations. The last page of the leaflet invites citizens to listen to the municipal radio series, "This Is Dallas," broadcast over the municipally-owned radio station, WRR, every Thursday evening.

Each radio program, dramatized under direction of the Dallas Little Theater Group, is devoted to services rendered by a city department, with City Manager James W. Aston conducting three fictional characters, Mr. and Mrs. John Dallas and their son Johnnie, on imaginary visits through the department. Character parts in the plays are taken by members of the Little Theater and by department heads and employees.

The motion picture has just been completed for use by luncheon clubs, civic organizations, and public schools this fall. The thirty-minute picture, in color, produced at a cost of $1,500, presents the story of the city's revenue dollar—its source and the services it finances through the various city divisions and departments. An off-scene voice explains details. The movie was produced by a local producer of commercial and advertising films.

Municipal Civil Service Organizations Surveyed

The 869 municipal civil service agencies in the country are set up on a wide variety of legal bases and under many types of organization, according to a recent survey by the Civil Service Assembly of the United States and Canada. They may be established by the state constitution, by an act of the legislature, by municipal charter, or by local ordinance.

Although the majority are called "civil service commissions" there are some fifty other names for them.

More than three-fourths of all city civil service agencies are of the three-member type, appointed so as to provide overlapping terms and thus to further continuity of policy, according to the survey. Commissions of five members are next high in number. Most of the municipal civil service commissioners hold office for six years, and in a few cities the commissioners serve

at the pleasure of the appointing authority.

Mayors make the appointments to city civil service commissions in a majority of the cities, and in the next largest group of cities appointments are made by the city councils. In some cities the commissioners are selected jointly by city or state officials, employee and civic groups; in others, elected by the people as commissioners or named ex-officio as commissioners after election to other positions. In a few cities they are appointed by the city managers.

Provisions in the civil service acts of Minnesota, New York, Rhode Island, Tennessee, and Wisconsin authorize the state personnel agencies to render technical and administrative service to local jurisdictions for a fee. In New Jersey similar assistance from the state can be obtained without cost upon approval of municipal voters.

Local Housing Authorities Now Number 175

The number of local housing authorities with United States Housing Authority loans reached 175 when President Roosevelt approved a loan list totaling $11,854,000 to ten such agencies on July 25, to construct low-rent projects in the nationwide slum clearance program. With these approvals the USHA loan contract column totaled $622,480,483 to local housing authorities in thirty-three states, the District of Columbia, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico. Earmarkings outstanding for further loans stood at $58,954,517, making a total of $681,435,000 in USHA commitments to 201 public housing bodies.

Administration of Second Hatch Act

The United States Civil Service Commission makes the following statement of general policy concerning administration of the Hatch act (approved July 19, 1940) designed to prevent pernicious political activity by officers or employees of state or local agencies whose principal employment is in connection with activities financed in whole or in part by loans or grants made by the United States or by any federal agency:

1. Those acts which clearly fall within the category of "pernicious political activity" will be prosecuted by the commission. This will mean that there will be at all times a reasonable relationship between the offenses prosecuted by the commission's staff, and the only penalty which the commission can impose, namely, that of removal from office, as prescribed by the law itself.

2. The commission will also administer the law in such a manner as to protect fully the civil rights of the employees subject to its provisions. In this connection, the commission will distinguish between participation in the discussions of issues of broad social, economic, or general public character on the one hand and partisan political issues on the other hand. The commission believes that the primary objective of the legislation is to prevent partisan political activity in connection with the conduct and management of political campaigns. The commission's administration of the law will conform to this objective.

Government Personnel Now Four and a Half Million

Approximately four and one-half million persons in the United States are employed in government service in federal, state, and local units on an annual payroll of $6,000,000,000, according to the 1940 census of the merit

system made by the Civil Service Assembly of the United States and Canada. About 1,200,000, or more than one-fourth, of these employees are in public education. More than one-half of the total number are in other non-military services.

At the first of 1940, nearly 29 per cent of the total number of government employees were listed on the federal payroll; 12 per cent at the state level; about 21 per cent in city government; and 12 per cent on county and township payrolls. Many in the last group are part-time and temporary.

Louisiana Adopts State Civil Service Act

WITH adoption of a civil service law last month, Louisiana becomes the eighteenth state to select its workers through a formal merit system, according to the Civil Service Assembly of the United States and Canada. The new law will not become entirely effective until July 1, 1942, although certain provisions, laying the foundation for the system and starting the machinery for classifying jobs, already are in effect.

The new act will be administered through a Department of Civil Service, and includes a state civil service commission appointed by the governor from a list of eligibles submitted by presidents of five colleges in the state, and a director of personnel chosen by the commission. Practically all positions in the state service except elected officers, legislative employees, court employees, and the military come under the act. Approximately 16,000 workers, it is estimated, will thus be placed under civil service.

If candidates who are citizens of the state cannot meet qualifications for a certain position, residence requirements may be waived. Veterans are still given preference, however.

As in the case of civil service laws in several other states, the Louisiana law also permits the state to give personnel services to local governments on their request.

States Vary Greatly in Vote Restrictions

Every state except Michigan can, under its statutes, bar an adult citizen from voting for at least one reason, according to a study just completed by the Council of State Governments. South Carolina has the greatest number (twenty-eight) of reasons for disqualification. Fifty different reasons were found in all the states taken together. There are two chief categories—persons convicted of certain crimes, and persons who are insane, idiots, incompetent, illiterate, paupers, etc.

New Hampshire Police School Cancelled

Increased work of state and local police due to "fifth column" scares, added protection necessary for the Portsmouth Navy Yard and certain factories, made it necessary to cancel the Police School planned at the University of New Hampshire. It is the hope that it will be possible to hold such a school next summer.

LASHLEY G. HARVEY
University of New Hampshire

Defense Personnel Program Speeded by U. S. Commission

The United States Civil Service Commission is revising old procedures and developing new machinery in an effort to provide maximum speed and efficiency in the recruitment of personnel for national defense agencies, according to the Civil Service Assembly. A number of executive orders authorize greater flexibility in filling positions. A new policy enables defense agencies to have first call for employees of other

government offices. The commission expects that in the next few months it will be asked to recruit close to 100,000 civil personnel.

British Local Governments and the War

A survey of the experience of British local governments in the national defense program, recently compiled by the American Municipal Association from British local government journals, reveals far-reaching effects.

Finance officers had to contend with the demand for economy, the order to cease borrowing, the rise in costs of materials, and the drop in tax revenue.

Officials responsible for recruiting personnel found their difficulties multiplied: first, by the loss of municipal employees to the armed forces; second, by the demand for expansion of all departments assisting in civil defense.

Police officers had to deal with sabotage, organize air raid protection, control traffic during blackouts. Fire departments established auxiliary corps, equipped new stations, and developed emergency water supplies.

City engineers took over the job of building air raid shelters in public places, of training demolition and rescue squads, and of protecting municipal utilities and other property from air raids.

Welfare programs had to be adjusted to the rise in the cost of living. Public housing authorities faced new rent collection worries. Public health officers, besides mobilizing hospital and first-aid services, were concerned with the spread of diseases which arise from population movement and congregation.

Finally, there was a whole series of new duties thrust on cities and counties—registration of all civilians, food rationing, and food production in parks and on vacant land.

Even the structure of British local government was modified. The traditional administration by a group of council committees was supplanted in some cities by a single emergency committee and a controller, and municipal elections were suspended by Parliament until after the war.

The basis of the British grant-in-aid system—that local governments must make some contribution to each aided activity—was abandoned, and many emergency measures were financed by 100 per cent grants from the national treasury.

More than 1,200,000 persons—one out of every forty persons in all Great Britain—were enrolled by local governments in emergency civil defense work before the end of 1939. A drive to boost the number still higher was launched early in 1940.

The new employees, mostly unpaid volunteers, were assigned to auxiliary fire or police organizations, to first-aid, rescue, and wrecking crews, to air raid control centers, to emergency hospital employment, and to all of the other varied phases of air raid precautions, or "A.R.P." The number of firemen, for example, rose from 20,000 to 200,000.

Every one of the 1,200,000 or more persons in the emergency services had to be given some training, usually from nine to twenty hours, British writers said. Including retraining, the total amount of instruction was well over 15,000,000 man-hours—undoubtedly the most intensive program of civilian training ever undertaken by any democratic government, and most of it in pioneer fields.

College Field Class Studies Local Organization

A class of twelve students from Antioch College, Yellow Springs, Ohio, has spent eight weeks in field study of community organization and problems

in two widely separated municipalities —Lewiston, Maine, and Anniston, Alabama. Accompanied by the professor of economics and business administration and his assistant, the class of twelve young men and women travels in a specially built and equipped truck. The problems given detailed attention include those in the fields of city government, public health, social welfare, recreation, religion, labor, manufacturing, etc.

Organizations Plan Meetings for Fall Months

The 32nd annual meeting of the **Civil Service Assembly of the United States and Canada** will be held in Cleveland, Ohio, September 30 to October 4, inclusive, with the Hotel Cleveland as conference headquarters. A series of panel discussions on technical personnel problems is planned, as well as meetings devoted to general questions of public personnel administration.

The **United States Conference of Mayors** meets September 19-21, in New York City. Headquarters will be at the Waldorf-Astoria.

The **American Public Works Association** will hold its 1940 Public Works Congress at the Book-Cadillac Hotel, Detroit, Michigan, September 30 to October 2, inclusive.

More than six hundred members of the **American Political Science Association** are expected to attend the meeting of the Association at the University of Chicago in December 1940, held in connection with the celebration of the University's fiftieth anniversary.

The **Tax Policy League** will hold its annual conference on December 2 and 3 in Chicago, with headquarters at the Palmer House. The subject of the discussions will be "Tax Barriers to Trade."

The place of recreation under present world conditions will be the general theme of the twenty-fifth **National Recreation Congress** to be held in Cleveland, Ohio, September 30-October 4. More than forty meetings dealing with a wide variety of topics in the recreation field are being arranged.

The 1940 **New York State Conference on Social Work** will be held in New York City, at the Hotel Pennsylvania, on October 8 to 11 inclusive, preceded by the usual conference institutes on October 7 and 8, including twenty-eight courses of four sessions each for social workers and public welfare officials.

American Judicature Society Offers Journal Free

Readers of the NATIONAL MUNICIPAL REVIEW are now privileged to receive free the *Journal* of the American Judicature Society, Law School, Ann Arbor, Michigan, if they inform the society of their desire to do so. The purpose of the society and the *Journal* is to promote the efficient administration of justice.

Citizen Action

Edited by Elwood N. Thompson

Citizen Groups Organize Schools for Voters

National organization plans adaptable for local use throughout the United States

Schools for voters are being organized by at least two national organizations this fall in preparation for local, state, and national elections.

Both the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs and the National League of Women Voters have prepared blueprints for these schools which are read-

ily adaptable by every citizen organization in the United States.

The national federation suggests that during October its local chapters take the initiative in establishing schools for voters with evening sessions.

Particular emphasis is placed on the importance of coöperation from other organizations. National headquarters recommends:

"The school could be formally opened . . . by official action of the mayor or chief local government official. The coöperation of local groups should be enlisted, such as service clubs, the chamber of commerce, the Y.W.C.A., League of Women Voters, A.A.U.W., the Board of Education, and farm or union organizations.

"Each organization should be asked to set up a committee to reach voters and about-to-be-voters and bring them to the classes. Enrollment blanks for the names and addresses of voters should be prepared. A public school auditorium may be secured for the sessions."

Program Blueprints

Programs for seven sessions, as outlined by the national federation would line up like this:

"*First session*: The Bill of Rights and/or the Constitution of the United States should be read. During the reading of the Constitution there should be pauses at various points for the reader to point out its application to current situations. A brief explanation may be given by a member of the bar association as to the method for amending the Constitution, together with a short description of the twenty-one amendments which have been added in the past one hundred and fifty years.

"The system of checks and balances as provided by the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of the government should be explained.

"Who can vote? A copy of the state election law, telling who is eligible to vote, how to become eligible, etc., can be secured from the local board of elections or from the secretary of state and should be given to each student. In some areas important restrictions are placed on voting.

"*Second session*: The two party system of government . . . the electoral college . . . the election of one-third of the U. S. Senate and a complete House of Representatives in 1940 should be explained. A speaker from the political science department of a university or the local bar association could give this section of the program.

"The local candidates for Congress from your district may be guests of honor at this meeting, each one to be asked to speak briefly on 'Why I Want to Represent This District in Congress'. . .

"How to analyze the records of local candidates is a fundamental problem. A questionnaire could be prepared which would give their stands on discriminatory legislation. It might be possible to coöperate with other groups in issuing these questionnaires. Ask the candidates the facts about their education, occupation, and party enrollment; specific questions on their attitude toward discriminations; their general philosophy of government.

"*Third session*: How to separate fact from fiction (a panel). The purpose of this session is similar to . . . a citizen laboratory—getting at the facts, recognizing the facts, sharpening our wits. The presiding officer will introduce members of the panel and encourage the audience to ask questions of them.

"The panel could consist of such persons as a newspaper editor, a radio official, a club woman, and an outstanding business man. The editor should outline how his newspaper is presenting the news of the 1940 campaign, the radio official should tell the rules his station is following about

dividing the time on the air between the political parties. . . . The business man may tell how he reaches his own conclusions on the issues as a sort of 'Exhibit A.' Then the audience should begin to participate.

"*Fourth session*: An 'Information Please' quiz may be arranged. Questions may be framed which bear on the facts brought out in the preceding three meetings. A capable presiding officer should be secured to put the questions to four 'experts.' The experts will be chosen because they are well informed on public affairs. . . . Questions which cannot be answered by the experts should be passed on to the audience. To add interest, there can be a cash register to 'ring out' wrong answers and to provide pennies for awards to the audience members who answer questions which the experts have flunked.

"*Fifth session*: Problems in local government. A social science high school teacher, a professor of political science, or some other qualified person should give a brief résumé of facts about your local unit of government. What offices are being filled? Candidates for local elections should be present to discuss 'Problems Facing My Community Today.'

"A 'chalk talk' might follow. If a double blackboard is secured, conflicting points of view on major local problems can be summarized. If a clever and humorous speaker can be found to do a monologue or running-fire comment, the audience will enjoy both seeing and hearing the chalk talk. Afterwards the speaker should erase the chalk talk and question the audience, rating each one ten points for each question answered. An official score keeper to sound a gong will add to the fun.

"*Sixth session*: 'Coming of age' session. Each member of the club should try to bring a young woman just twenty-one to all sessions of the school. The sixth session should afford instruction in passing the literacy test—if one is required in your state, the operation of voting machines, the marking of ballots, the method of enrollment in a political party. Two workers, each from a different party, could act as teachers. Information on the election district or ward of each voter and the address of the place of voting could be given.

"*Seventh session*: The first part of the final session may be used for a group quiz, reviewing the ground covered during the week. 'Diplomas' in the form of letters on the club stationery certifying the completion of the course may be issued.

"This closing session should face the question of 'whither now?' Shall we go on from here? What is needed in the plan for tomorrow? How can we function 365 days in the year? A forum might be planned, under the guidance of a strong committee, which would present possibilities for discussion. Perhaps, for example, your town needs a community council, in which case the forum might be an excellent place to introduce the idea to the public.

"At the close of the session a thoughtful person should give a challenging summary of what it means to be an American today, sketching our responsibilities as citizens to elect to Congress the men or women who have the right attitudes toward important questions at stake; our duty to our country in accepting our individual responsibility at the polls. International relationships depend on the attitudes of the new Congress—we have a solemn and sobering duty. The school may close with the salute to the flag and the singing of 'America'."

Campaign Schools

The League of Women Voters plans

to hold one-day campaign schools in thirty-one states and six hundred local communities before election day. The schools will be open to the public, led and managed by the local leagues.

They will examine the "representative function in a democracy," "political parties," and the "conduct of foreign policy." Party platforms, campaign speeches, league experience in promoting federal legislation, brief articles on the general problems as well as the usual textbooks will be used in the schools.

Discussion of the "representative function in a democracy" will include the relation of the legislative to the executive branch, devices for lightening the legislator's burdens such as legislative councils and the elimination of patronage, the relationship between legislators and their local constituencies, and the meaning of representation. Emphasis will be placed on the point that Congress must be freed from the excesses of local self-interest because it is imperative that we speak as a nation with one strong voice.

The session on political parties will include evaluation of the parties as channels for political activity and expression of political views, investigation of the relationship of citizen groups to political parties, and study of reasons why political parties in the United States are not based primarily on difference of issues.

Discussion on the conduct of foreign policy will center around the respective functions of the executive and legislative branches of government. Importance of public opinion in determining direction of foreign policy will be considered.

Special articles on each of the discussion subjects have been prepared for study and guidance.

Man Can Bite Dog in Reform Field Too

The Connecticut Merit System Association will select a field secretary for its own staff by examinations comparable to those given for civil service positions.

Maxwell Devoe, Rhode Island State Personnel Director, says it is "the first time, to my knowledge, that an association has actually decided to carry through such plans."

The position will pay $2,400 a year. Candidates will be judged on three ratings, the first to be based on a record of experience and training, the second on a written examination, and the third on an oral interview given to those who successfully pass the first two parts.

The examinations are open to men between the ages of twenty-five and forty-five, living anywhere in the United States, who have a professional knowledge equivalent to a college education and who have had one year's experience or training in community-wide fund raising, executive responsibility in a public or private personnel agency; success in organizing fraternal, labor, social, charitable or civic groups; graduate training in public administration, public or group contact work, or any combination of experience and training which the examining committee deems equivalent.

Full particulars regarding duties, applications, and procedure to be used, which follow that used by most advanced municipal personnel departments, may be obtained by writing to the Connecticut Merit System Association at 33 Lewis Street, Hartford, Connecticut. Applications will be received until November 4.

Butler to Require Citizenship Course

Butler University's President D. S.

Robinson and Dr. Roy M. Robbins, head of the department of history and political science, have announced a new program in citizenship. All sophomores will be required to enroll in a full year course in American government and citizenship, which will emphasize the development and character of political institutions as well as the rights, duties, and privileges of citizens.

Dr. Franklin L. Burdette, formerly of Princeton University, has been appointed assistant professor and director of the course. Other members of the staff are Assistant Professor Warren R. Isom, Dr. Albert R. Highley, formerly of Rutgers University, and Dr. David M. Silver, recently of the University of Illinois.

Seattle League Prepares Autumn Program

Committees and staff members of the Seattle Municipal League are concentrating on city and county finances during the summer months in preparation for budget hearings next October, at which the league plans to assist in the establishment of sound fiscal policies for all branches of local government.

Studies published to date in the *Seattle Municipal News* include a fifteen-year survey of King County finances, showing that it has operated at a deficit consistently since 1924; and various analyses of county expenditures, particularly since 1930.

In coöperation with Professor A. N. Lorig, an instructor in municipal accounting at the University of Washington, and officials of the City Comptroller's department, the league also published simplified statements on Seattle's financial condition over the past ten years.

In a declaration of policy accompanying the financial reports, the Municipal League declared that "1941 budgets now being prepared by city and county officials must be considered in light of the national defense emergency. It is now necessary to cut out some of those luxuries to which, in typical democratic fashion, we have become accustomed. Tax preparedness, to clear the way for necessary military and other expenses, must take the form of reductions beyond all previous conceptions of local economy."

EWEN C. DINGWALL
Municipal League of Seattle

County and Township

Edited by Elwyn A. Mauck

Two Counties Seek Manager Plan

Onondaga, New York, and Sanoma, California, want new charters.

The special commission appointed by the Board of Supervisors of **Onondaga County, New York,** has chosen to draft a charter as permitted by the selective plan in Chapter 863 of the Laws of 1937 (the Buckley act). It has submitted its proposals to the Board of Supervisors which has sent a certified copy of a resolution, calling for a vote at the November election, to the Board of Elections. If the plan is adopted by a majority vote both in the city of Syracuse and in the area outside of the city, the charter will become effective January 1, 1942.

The plan calls for a full-time manager appointed by the Board of Supervisors for a four-year term. There are no residence requirements, and his salary would be determined by the board. He is given administrative control through broad powers of appointment and supervision over the administration. Thus the treasurer's office is abolished and replaced by an appointive director of finance. The offices of coroner and welfare commis-

sioner also are made appointive under the manager.

An elective comptroller heads the department of audit and control, and the fiscal year is changed to the calendar year. An effective executive budget system is provided. Appointive offices are made subject to change, abolition, and consolidation by the manager and Board of Supervisors. The powers and organization of the board remain substantially unchanged.

California County Seeks Manager Government

The grand jury committee on county government, which recently reported to the **Sanoma County** (Santa Rosa), California, Board of Supervisors, has recommended that the county seriously consider adoption of the manager plan of government. While no definite suggestions are made in the report as to the pattern such a charter should take, it is generally understood that Sacramento County's charter is considered the best form adaptable to Sanoma. A strong merit system is also recommended.

Amendment Would Abolish Peace Justices

If the proposed amendment to the West Virginia constitution is approved in the November election, the justice of peace courts and their attendant constables will be abolished and replaced by county-wide "summary courts." In the United States generally there is a widespread belief that the office of justice of peace is inefficient and outmoded, but except for action taken by a few counties in Virginia and Tennessee, the West Virginia proposal is a pioneer effort in this phase of reform in the state judiciary.

The amendment was passed by the state legislature in 1939. It would abolish the positions of nearly six hundred justices of peace whose duties include trying minor cases, issuing warrants, and determining bail. Similarly it would eliminate the 585 constables who are the chief administrative officers for the justices.

Judges elected for four-year terms would preside over the "summary courts" provided by the amendment. They would be assisted by the sheriff and his deputies who would act as administrative officers of the court. The courts would have jurisdiction in criminal law over cases involving misdemeanors and in civil law over cases involving $500 or less. The jury in criminal cases would be composed of six members rather than twelve. Appeals to the higher courts would be permitted.

It is believed that these reforms would eliminate many evils emanating from justice of peace courts. For example, abolition of the fee system of compensation would remove the incentive of judges to encourage litigation and to create speed traps. Conflicts between the constables on one hand and city, county, and state police officers on the other would be abolished, thereby eliminating many of the present uncertainties in law enforcement. Proponents believe that such reforms instituted through the adoption of their proposal would give West Virginia a unified and efficient system for the administration of justice that might well serve as a model for other states.

Model By-Laws Drafted for Massachusetts Towns

The research department of the Massachusetts Federation of Taxpayers Associations has published a forty-eight page pamphlet, *Model By-Laws for Massachusetts Towns,* which undertakes to codify and standardize by-laws relating to the financial operations of town (township) government. The pamphlet includes an interpretation of the by-laws and suggestions regarding methods of adoption.

Publication of the pamphlet is the result of numerous requests from the towns to the federation for aid in drafting and revising their legislation. Only a few

towns have well drafted by-laws at the present time, and in the majority of cases such by-laws are incomplete, inadequate, and outmoded. The importance of this pamphlet is demonstrated by the fact that the 312 Massachusetts towns are the major units of local government for more than one and one-third million people.

Three Illinois Counties Have Financial Surveys

Financial studies of Morgan, Stevenson, and McHenry Counties, Illinois, have been completed recently by the Citizens' Public Expenditure Survey of Illinois, a new research agency organized approximately a year ago with headquarters in Chicago. The survey is planning to undertake additional studies of local units of government throughout the middle west.

The following are some of the recommendations resulting from the studies of these counties: Installation of a centralized purchasing system embodying quantity purchasing and competitive bidding, more careful budgeting, more detailed and more complete audits, greater care in keeping and preserving records, consolidation of school districts, and combination of road districts. In Morgan County alone possible economies amounting to $70,000 were pointed out and submitted to local officials and citizens for consideration.

LEON WEAVER
University of Illinois

Taxation and Finance

Edited by Wade S. Smith

Arkansas Completes Year of Assessment Supervision

Takes first step toward securing up-to-date assessment procedure

On July 1 the tax division of the Arkansas Corporation Commission completed its first year of state supervision of local assessments. The results, although not monumental, are encouraging.

The Arkansas assessment system is noticeably out of line with most of the eighty principles set down by the National Association of Assessing Officers.

Arkansas assessors are elected for two-year terms, while the NAAO's committee on assessment principles recommended that assessors be appointed on a merit basis and serve as long as competent. Salaries are inadequate "to attract qualified persons to office"; roll copying prevails; self-assessment is the rule; tax maps are almost unknown; little attempt to "survey the property" is made; property descriptions are antiquated; and the legal assessment rate is 50 per cent, to name only a few violations of assessment principles.

Until 1939 the tax division of the Corporation Commission consisted of one $2,400-man whose duty it was to assess all public utilities in the state and perform all other functions usually handled by tax commissions in other states.

Studies Show Inequalities

A study of the assessment situation in Arkansas, published in 1928, showed that "flagrant inequalities in assessment exist on every hand."[1]

In order to study the Arkansas property tax assessment situation, a selected sample of 2,033 rural and urban properties was taken.[2] Estimated true value

[1] C. O. Brannen, *The Farm Tax Problem in Arkansas,* Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station Bulletin No. 223, p. 27.

[2] See the author's *Inequalities in the Arkansas Property Tax Assessment System,* Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station Bulletin No. 269.

was ascertained from records of real estate firms, lending agencies, and owners. Comparisons indicated that individual property owners were assessed at varying average percentages, certain types of property were favored and others discriminated against, and properties in adjoining counties were assessed at different average ratios of assessed to true value. Real estate worth less than $600 was assessed, on an average, at 53.6 per cent, while properties worth $40,000 and over were assessed at 15.4 per cent. Farms worth less than $5 per acre were assessed at 70.4 per cent of true value, while farms worth $70 and over per acre were assessed at 16.7 per cent. Assessment percentages on the properties surveyed showed a marked deviation from the average assessment percentage, indicating a high degree of inaccuracy in the system.

A personal property assessment survey made by the State Department of Education and the WPA in 1938 showed that no radios were assessed in thirty-three of the state's seventy-five counties, no firearms in fifty-seven, no chickens in fifty-two, no refrigerators in thirty-nine, and no bicycles or motorcycles in thirty-six counties.

The tax division of the Corporation Commission, in 1939, reported: "For a great many years criticism of the administration of the ad valorem tax has been common within Arkansas. Unquestionably, over the state as a whole, assessment of property has been in a chaotic condition. As a result it is recognized generally that assessments are not equitable. This has tended to place property assessment on a hypocritical basis."

Taking cognizance of these deficiencies, the 1939 session of the General Assembly appropriated funds for considerable expansion of the tax division and the establishment of assessment supervisors. The division now consists of the tax supervisor, assistant tax supervisor, valuation engineer, and seven district supervisors. Since the inception of the new division, one member of the commission has given almost his entire attention to tax work.

The activities of the new division have been along two lines: reassessment of utilities, assisting and supervising local assessors.

Reassessment of Utilities

One of the first steps of the reinvigorated tax division was complete revision and standardization of forms used by utility companies in rendering reports. Formulas for determining utility values were also overhauled and applied, replacing the old system of copying prior values and accepting blindly reduction requests of taxpayers. Much to the surprise of one railroad, its request for a major reduction in assessed valuation has been vigorously contested in the courts on the ground that such reduction would be contrary to scientific assessment procedure. The railroad was surprised because it had been accustomed to having its reduction requests honored without question.

Through a thorough revamping of assessment methods used for valuation of motor carriers, and with the cooperation of the carriers, assessed valuation on this type of property was increased from $197,550 to $983,210 in one year without protest from any carrier.

"A surprising situation with reference to private car taxes" was revealed by an investigation of the tax division reported in its 1939 annual report. About one-half of the taxes have been delinquent in recent years. Under the law a 25 per cent penalty is automatically assessed against delinquents. The investigation showed that settlements had been made on the basis of approximately 50 per cent of the orig-

inal tax with the entire penalty waived. Out of $46,395 taxes and penalties charged against delinquent companies from 1937 through 1939, only $19,787 was collected, and of this amount the state paid $4,934 in fees to its special counsel. The new tax division has taken steps to remedy this situation.

During the four-year period, 1935-38, the state paid special counsel $42,805 to collect delinquent franchise taxes. In 1939, for the first time since 1934, the tax division was able to get all corporations to pay franchise taxes before the delinquent date. Discrepancies have also been eliminated from the franchise tax through checking the tax division's records with those of the Secretary of State.

Assistance and Supervision

The Corporation Commission paved the way for state supervision through a series of district meetings for assessors followed by a state meeting. This was done to acquaint the assessors and the people of the state with the possibilities in a program of better assessments. It was emphasized that the supervisors were to be in no sense policemen, but were to act as advisors and arbiters.

The first specific step taken by the new tax division was the checking of state income tax returns against personal property assessments. The staff in the central office copied income tax returns and turned them over to district supervisors who worked with county assessors correcting inequalities uncovered.

One of the early discoveries of field men was that in several counties boards of equalization were not established, or, if established, were not functioning as required by statute. Steps were taken to correct these deficiencies.

The tax division, with the assistance of a Committee on Classification and Schedules composed of one assessor from each supervision district, developed uniform valuation schedules for several types of property including automobiles and oil properties. These were widely used by county assessors and greater state-wide uniformity was accomplished as a result. Schedules for additional types of property are being compiled.

Handicaps and Shortcomings

The personnel of the tax division is not as well paid as is desirable to attract competent people. In many instances, supervisors receive less than the assessors they supervise. This does not lend itself to the establishment of a system whereby the better assessors will be attracted to supervisory positions.

Supervisors are not selected on a merit basis and do not have permanent tenure. They should be placed on a civil service basis.

The new tax division lacks a research unit, so essential to the success of tax commissions. The active administrative officials have neither the time nor temperament to carry on sorely needed research to give a firm foundation to the whole program.

The Corporation Commission, as now constituted, is charged with the regulation of all transportation companies in addition to tax work. The tax division should be separated from the rate division and established under a tax commission or attached to some other state department more closely associated with taxation and local government. The task of regulating transportation companies is a monumental one and is deserving of the entire attention of the Corporation Commission.

The superstructure of the tax division and supervisors still rests on a defective foundation, the constituent parts

of which are elective, short-term officials attempting to administer a cumbersome, self-assessment system. Almost any reform is a step in the right direction for Arkansas, and assessment supervision has made a notable contribution during its first year. A really modern and efficient system, however, cannot be established until some of the fundamental deficiencies of the assessment system are corrected.

ESTAL E. SPARLIN
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College of Agriculture

Municipal Bankruptcy Act Covers Many Local Governments

The extended municipal bankruptcy act, signed by President Roosevelt on June 28, authorizes approximately 1,500 cities, counties, and other local governments to take advantage of its terms, according to a report of the Municipal Finance Officers Association.

The current amendments to the municipal bankruptcy act make it possible for local governments, with the consent of creditors, to adjust their debts until June 30, 1942. Most significant among the changes is the inclusion of special assessment districts and county governments, hitherto omitted. The amended act also specifies that the fiscal agent, attorney, or other person promoting the composition of debts under the act shall not receive compensation for his services from both the governmental unit and the bondholders.

The number of localities struggling with debt default is fewer by several hundred than it was when the federal municipal bankruptcy act was first approved in 1934, and almost two hundred fewer than even a year back, exclusive of special assessment districts, as shown in a survey made a few months ago by *The Bond Buyer*, municipal bond trade journal.

As of February 1, 1940, a total of 734 cities and counties were in default; on the same date in 1939 the number stood at 824. Six hundred school districts and 137 other districts—water, sanitation, etc.—were also listed as being in arrears with their bonded debt payments, although the actual number is probably much larger.

As late as 1938, it was estimated that 3,100 local governments—about 2 per cent of all local units in the country—had defaulted. Only a few, however, have reduced the principal of their debts.

Not all defaulting governmental units settle their difficulties by applying the bankruptcy act, the association pointed out. A number of them have taken advantage of the recent favorable interest rates on bonds and have provided for refundings and readjustments. A majority of defaults are adjusted by direct dealings between the interested parties. Other factors, such as "cash basis" legislation in New Jersey and improved economic conditions in Florida cities, have aided recovery in the worst default areas.

Louisiana Repeals Its Sales Tax

Louisiana is the eighth state to abandon the sales tax as a revenue source. On December 31 of this year purchasers will cease paying out tax tokens as a result of recent repeal legislation, the Federation of Tax Administrators reports.

New York State allowed its sales tax law to expire in 1934, Vermont and New Jersey repealed such taxes in 1935, and Idaho, Kentucky, Maryland, and Oregon did away with sales taxes in 1936.

The act repealing Louisiana's tax also rescinds the authority granted New Orleans to levy a municipal sales tax. Remaining on the municipal sales

tax list are six cities, of which New York City is the only large one.

Tobacco Tax Upheld by New Hampshire Court

The Supreme Court of New Hampshire upheld the state tax of 15 per cent on tobacco on June 20. The tax, which applies to all tobacco, showed a return of $990,000 during its first six months of existence and promises a greater sum than was collected from towns each year. Many municipalities have shown economies this year because they were relieved of the state tax by the tobacco tax. The decision was considered one of the most liberal of those handed down by the Supreme Court. Its liberality may be challenged, however, on the ground that the court held the tax was a tax on property and within the constitutional standard of uniformity. It was pointed out specifically that the "opinion does not open the way to graduated taxes." Aside from this constitutional point of the decision, it must be admitted that in upholding the tax the court granted a substantial relief to the towns.

LASHLEY G. HARVEY
University of New Hampshire

Iowa Finds Quick Use for Tax-Forfeited Property

Because of an amended tax-title law enabling counties to purchase and dispose of tax delinquent property, Polk County (Des Moines), Iowa, has within the last few years acquired land for a number of municipal purposes, sold several hundred parcels at a profit, and encouraged local home building, a report to the American Society of Planning Officials shows.

Polk County has a real estate department, set up after enactment in 1935 of the "scavenger tax-sale law" which allows counties to acquire title to tax-delinquent land for the use and benefit of other taxing bodies. The department determines whether property acquired by tax sale can be put to public use or whether it should be offered for sale.

Among properties so converted during the past five years were a greenhouse which was turned over to Des Moines for use as a municipal greenhouse, a large tract in the center of Des Moines with a natural lake now made into a municipal park, land for a hospital site, and a considerable amount of property along street developments.

During the last calendar year the real estate department sold 694 parcels of land at an aggregate sale price of $66,881, which was $6,465 in excess of the amount of tax delinquency, interest, costs, and penalties. During the same year 186 permits were issued for construction on vacant lots sold by the county, with a combined building value of $553,000.

Many of the cheaper lots falling to the county were sold to people of limited income for $50 apiece, enabling such purchasers to build a home and become property owners when otherwise it would have been beyond their means.

The scavenger tax-sale law was designed, primarily, to reclaim tax-delinquent lands for the tax rolls. Although certain concessions are granted former owners of tax-reverted land, the bids of "outsiders" must at least equal the amount due in general taxes, interest, costs, and penalties before they will be recognized as legitimate bids.

Proportional Representation
Edited by George H. Hallett, Jr.

Five Referenda on Adoption of P. R.

A Vacancy in New York
P. R. in India and Malta

The November 5 election will decide the fate of efforts to secure "Plan E," the city manager plan with proportional representation, in **Cambridge** and **Chicopee, Massachusetts.** Sufficient signatures were filed in these cities to bring the question to a vote under Massachusetts law, and vigorous campaigns are now under way.

North Adams and **Quincy** have also filed similar petitions, the sufficiency of which has not yet been certified.

Lynn filed petitions but they have been declared insufficient by the Board of Election Commissioners.

Sufficient signatures were collected in **Springfield,** the state's second-largest city, but those behind the movement there decided it was wiser to conduct a more thorough educational campaign and bring the issue to a vote in 1942, the next year in which such referenda are permitted.

Cambridge nearly succeeded in adopting Plan E in a colorful campaign in 1938, and Quincy also recorded a creditable vote on its adoption the same year. This year the P.R.-manager forces are out to win. It will be the first attempt in North Adams and Chicopee, though Chicopee narrowly missed adopting "Plan D," the manager plan without P.R., in 1938.

Johnstown, New York, to Vote on Charter Revision

The thriving industrial city of Johnstown in the Mohawk Valley is expecting to vote November 5 on an extensive revision of its charter prepared for the Johnstown Non-Partisan Charter Committee by the National Municipal League. The revision includes P.R. for the council, the city manager plan, a modern budget and financial procedure, and most of the other features of the model city charter of the National Municipal League.

The question is being put before the voters by the petition procedure provided in the state's city home rule law. A sufficient petition containing signatures numbering more than 10 per cent of the city's last vote for governor was filed with the city clerk July 1. Since the city council showed no signs of submitting the proposal to the voters in response to this first petition, the committee proceeded under the leadership of Louis K. Maylender, Jr., to collect enough further signatures to force the issue. Under New York law if a city council does not respond to a 10 per cent petition for a charter amendment within two months after its filing, a second petition with new signatures numbering 5 per cent of the last gubernatorial vote in the city and submitted at least sixty days before the general election can compel the amendment's submission.

White Plains Campaign Postponed

The committee of the City Government League of White Plains working for the introduction of the city manager form of government, with proportional representation in the selection of the council, decided to abandon its efforts to secure a referendum this year.

The very light registration in 1939 made about 8,000 voters out of a total of 22,000 ineligible to sign the necessary petition. The local GOP machine terrorized all city employees. They did

not dare jeopardize their jobs by signing the petition. As one colored man told the writer, "Yes, city manager and P.R. are good for the city, but signing your petition would be bad for me. We are free slaves now."

A garageman who signed last year's petition for the P.R. referendum was threatened with the loss of all the business the city was giving him. He said that obviously he would not sign another petition.

A substitute teacher, who taught many days in 1938, did not get a single day's work in 1939-40. A near relative had circulated the petition for P.R.

A groceryman, who was getting more than $1,000 a month in welfare orders in 1938-39, was cut to less than $100 a month after he signed the P.R. petition.

The members of the City Employees' Association were warned not to let their names be found as signers.

Welfare, schools, public works, and all functions of the city are so ruthlessly used by the machine that eventually the people will revolt.

In spite of opposition, the committee was able to enlist a small corps of able workers, and if it had had another ten days, it might have obtained the quota necessary to put the question on the ballot.

Next time, work will begin earlier and White Plains should win.

A. V. Brisson

White Plains, New York

A Vacancy Election for the New York Council

A novel situation arose this spring in the New York City council. Councilman John Cashmore, majority leader, was chosen by the council to serve as borough president of Brooklyn to fill the vacancy caused by the death of Borough President Raymond Ingersoll, pending the election of a successor at the polls this fall. This left a vacancy in the council delegation from Brooklyn, which had been elected by P.R. from the borough at large the previous fall.

As required in the city charter, the council filled this vacancy in its own number by choosing a person of the same party and from the same borough, Edward Vogel, who had been one of the unsuccessful Democratic candidates at the regular election. The state constitution provides, however, that "in case of elective officers no person appointed to fill a vacancy shall hold his office by virtue of such appointment longer than the commencement of the political year next succeeding the first annual election after the happening of the vacancy." Thus it became necessary to hold a vacancy election at the polls this fall, as provided by law for other elective officers, even though it would have been more in harmony with P.R. principles for the council's appointment of a person of the same party to hold for the remainder of the unexpired two-year term.

The charter is silent as to how such an election shall be conducted. An application was made in the Supreme Court in Kings County by one Albert Ross for an order to require the election to be held by proportional representation. It was evident, however, that the P.R. rules with their provision for the election of one member for every 75,000 votes cast in the borough were inapplicable to the filling of a single vacancy, and the Court of Appeals in a decision handed down on July 24, so held. The court further held, as the city's corporation counsel had contended, that the election should be held in the borough at large according to all the regular provisions of the state election law, including partisan primaries. Councilman Vogel is a candidate at the general election to succeed himself.

In 1936, while the charter revision commission was drafting the present city charter, the New York Citizens Union pointed out to it the possibility of such a situation as has now occurred and recommended that any vacancy be filled by a preferential recount of the ballots which elected the vacating member, together with the ballots which did not succeed in electing any member—as provided in the new charter of Yonkers. This method would not have been an "appointment" and could therefore have been used to fill any vacancy for the duration of the unexpired term. Furthermore, it would have preserved the proportionality of the result on the basis of the expressed wishes of the voters at the time of the regular election. But the charter commission thought it best not to lengthen the P.R. provisions for so infrequent an occurrence, which even when it happened would not be likely to disturb the proper proportions a great deal.

Having failed in its original suggestion, the Citizens Union proposed to the state constitutional convention of 1938 that in the case of a body elected by P.R. an appointment be permitted to hold for the duration of the unexpired term. This proposal (Int. 632, introduced by Delegate Edgar Nathan, as amended) was reported favorably to the convention by its committee on the governor and other state officers. It was voted down because of hostility to P.R. by much the same combination as a few days later carried the proposal to ban the use of P.R. altogether, a proposal which the voters of the state overwhelmingly rejected.

In the present case the necessity of holding a majority election to fill a P.R. vacancy will make no difference unless Brooklyn's usual large Democratic majority should be upset. If it had been one of the minority members who resigned, however, the requirement would obviously have taken one place from the minority and handed it improperly to the majority as excessive representation for the last year of the term.

P. R. Finds Favor in India

India is not unfamiliar with proportional representation. In the Government of India Act, 1919, provision was made for certain limited and experimental uses of proportional representation. Ten years later the Indian Statutory Commission, under the chairmanship of Sir John Simon, visited India, and in its report said: "The second feature of our proposal, to which we attach very great importance, is the use by the provincial councils of the method of proportional representation in selecting members for the Federal Assembly." And again: "A system of proportional representation, following the model of that in use in the South African Parliament, has been constantly employed in the Legislative Assembly and the provincial councils for the selection of committees. No difficulty has been found in its practical operation, and the members fully understand it and appreciate its advantages."

Proportional representation owes its introduction in India to Great Britain. But it is noteworthy that, as was the case in Ireland, the principle has found favour with the people of India. That powerful body, the All India Congress Committee, is elected in two stages. First, the supporters of Congress in each province elect a provincial committee on a territorial basis, and, second, the provincial committee elects delegates to the National Congress by the single transferable vote system of P.R.

—Annual Report of the British P.R. Society, June 1940

Malta Continues Use of P. R.

In July, 1939, under the constitution granted in the previous February, the elective members of the new Council of Government of Malta were elected by the single transferable vote form of proportional representation. The first use in Malta of this method of voting took place in 1921 under the constitution granted when Mr. L. S. Amery was Parliamentary Under-secretary for the Colonies. Three languages are spoken in Malta—English, Maltese, and Italian. There is a considerable proportion of illiteracy. Nevertheless, all elections held in Malta with the single transferable vote have been carried out with the utmost smoothness and the results have been representative; and when, in 1931, a commission was appointed to examine the working of the Maltese constitution, leading members of all the political parties in Malta gave evidence in favour of maintaining the proportional system.

—Annual Report of the British P.R. Society, June 1940

MRS. MINORITY

(Continued from page 589)

These are the changes and advances we need to dramatize."

By implication, then, lack of dramatization is what is wrong with the Fusion forces which originally put in both LaGuardia and Mrs. Earle—although each, in his own way, is strong enough to manage an independent campaign. Mrs. Earle will not admit that LaGuardia is on the verge of deserting New York at the first invitation to greener pastures. She says merely that she is not in the Mayor's confidence on that score. Nor will she admit that there is anything wrong with the Fusion forces now. But she *is* deeply concerned with the need for keeping the city government out of Tammany and machine hands, and it is obvious that she would like more than the minority of seven councilmen which the Fusion forces were able to muster last year. A citizens' group which can dramatize good government is, to her mind, the answer.

"If I were not a member of the council I'd work every day and every night for such a group," she says earnestly.

It may be that fearlessness is the word for Genevieve, courage in the face of the highly organized machine politics against which she has battled, in one guise or another, since 1907. As she says herself: "I have no fear—except perhaps the fear that I may sometime find myself on the side of the majority. Then I'll know there's something wrong with the way I think."

They do say that a strong minority is the hallmark of democracy.

Addition for Tables on Comparative Tax Rates

The following footnote for Dayton, Ohio, (No. 41 in the list of cities) should be appended to the 1939 comparative tax rates set forth in the December 1939 issue of the REVIEW.

"City rate includes $2.82 and county rate $.36 for flood protection. City rate includes $1.50 for poor relief and school rate includes $2.00 special levy effective for two- and one-year periods respectively."

Books in Review

EDITED BY ELSIE S. PARKER

The Federal Income Tax. By Roy G. and Gladys C. Blakey. New York City, Longmans, Green and Co., 1940. xvii, 640 pp. $7.50.

What follows is in no sense a review; it is simply a notice to those who might not otherwise come to know that there is now available this stupendous monograph on the history of the legislation, administration, and adjudication of the process by which approximately 40 per cent of the ordinary revenues of the federal government is now obtained. It is to be hoped that the formidable number of pages in the book will not prevent its being read by many people, for three-quarters of it consists in most part of fascinating history fascinatingly presented.

Nothing so releases the energies than to first let a person become possessed of money and hold legal title to it and then take some of it from him by authority of law. The history of the income tax is, therefore, the history of the major social ideas, and the forces which generate them, for the last sixty years—hence also of politics both exoteric and esoteric. The historical section of the book is just as vivid and stirring in its way as the four famous Greek dramas.

This is followed by a chapter which is of interest to far more than the special group for which the entire monograph was written. It deals with the "Evolution of the Definition of Taxable Income." No other piece of writing known to this reviewer is as fine an example of a process which all concerned with molding public opinion must keep in the foreground of consciousness. Here the problem of the meaning of words at a given time, and the problem of the change these meanings undergo with time, become so impressed upon one that no teacher of semantics could ask for a better example of his discipline.

The concluding chapter, we are pleased to learn, does not contain all the judgments the joint authors have reached concerning the effects of the federal income tax on state and local tax systems and "in relation to the national economic and social milieu." On such questions, we are told in a footnote, discussion is reserved for the future. Those interested in getting sufficient revenue for local government can look forward hopefully to the fulfillment of that promise.

To return once more to the significance of the book in the study of the history of ideas and attitudes in the politico-economic realm, the authors declare in their last paragraph that "no important tax is better qualified than the income tax to minimize social friction and promote social coöperation. That is, no other important tax is more in harmony with the ideals of democracy." Today this statement is given universal assent, but as late as 1894 a United States Senator, acclaimed as a great man, represented the majority when he associated it with "socialism, communism, and devilism." The change of attitude did not just happen but has occurred because men of vision constructed weapons out of ideas, and since this book is the story of how they did it, it has a value beyond its value, great as that is, as a study of the federal income tax.

W.J.M.

Democracy's Challenge to Education. Edited by Beulah Amidon. New York City, Farrar & Rinehart, Inc., 1940. xii, 263 pp. $1.50.

"Three hundred and twenty-four million dollars is much money. Even in a current military budget it would be a major item. In the civil budget of one state in the depression year of 1932 it was enough to make the fingers of

deficit-hounded businessmen itch. Three hundred and twenty-four million dollars was the cost of public education in the State of New York in 1932."

This is the lead paragraph of one chapter in "Democracy's Challenge to Education." It suggests only one reason for this omnibus survey of education by some twenty-five "experts" who are also writers. On the premise that it was about time that the intelligent American had a chance to see American education as a whole, the editors of *Survey Graphic* devoted their entire November 1939 issue to this question. The issue sold out many times over, thus proving that it answered a need. Its issuance in book form, well illustrated with excellent photographs and charts, supplemented by lists of view questions, and equipped with a bibliography, will certainly serve a useful purpose. Entertainingly discussed are such subjects as the value of nursery schools, the problem of jobless youth, the quality of American teachers, rural schools—in short, all the aspects, new and old, of education for democracy.

M. R.

Manager Boroughs in Pennsylvania. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Government Administration Service, 1940. 28 pp.

The compilers of this handbook on council-manager government in Pennsylvania boroughs have managed to cram most of the essential facts on the subject into twenty-five mimeographed pages.

They explain the manager plan briefly and outline how it can be set up to operate in Pennsylvania boroughs. How the plan works in the boroughs which now have it is also summarized as a guide to persons interested in establishing manager government in their own communities.

Finally there appears a model borough manager ordinance making the picture as complete as space limits of a pamphlet will permit.

This is the sixth in a valuable series which covers briefly and practically a variety of subjects of specific importance in Pennsylvania local government. Such series as these give interested citizen leaders practical information and guidance in their struggles for better government.

E.N.T.

Municipal Administration. By John M. Pfiffner. New York City, The Ronald Press, 1940. xvi, 582 pp. $4.00.

This addition to the *Political Science Series* is also an addition to the spate of textbooks on municipal government which have been pouring from the presses in the last few years. But it cannot be said to be an unnecessary one; far from it. For one thing the principal author, who is professor of government at the University of Southern California, his colleagues and assistants consciously set themselves the goal of writing a textbook that would "teach." That word is not easy to define but it includes the concept of "easy to understand while reading and the content remembered without much difficulty." The book should achieve that purpose for it is racily written; for instance, we are told that a certain municipal administrator was "roiled." A list of forty-nine illustrations is given but they are practically all diagrams which "teach" much better than pictures, as a rule. This is a feature future textbooks would do well to copy.

The book has eight parts and twenty-seven chapters. The division seems reasonable both as to major and minor topics. It is questionable, however, whether schoolmen will be satisfied with the scant twenty pages given to education or with the fact that it is only one chapter of the section entitled "Cultural Activities." The following chapter deals with "Libraries, Museums, and Music," and quotes a librarian as saying, "the quicker the physical book wears out the better." That leads one to ask whether

books which contain so much good material in one binding as this could not also be put into other physical forms. For instance, a slight modification of the two chapters on police would produce a pamphlet which might not only sell at a low price but greatly influence public opinion as to what this oldest of municipal functions has now become, and what the citizen should expect and not expect of it.

A book of almost six hundred pages is formidable enough to put into the hands of any young person who is toying with the thought of some day being in municipal administration; and in putting such a book together the question must always be not what to put in but what must be left out. But it is to be hoped that whoever uses it in teaching will enlarge upon the problem of enlisting citizen interest in municipal government and administration. This is directly dealt with only in the last paragraphs of the opening chapter and indirectly in part of chapter IV, though it must be said this chapter deals in an unusually telling way with that agency which is indispensable to good citizens in the modern city—the bureau of municipal research.

W.J.M.

American State Government and Administration. By Austin F. MacDonald. New York, Thomas V. Crowell Company, 1940. xii, 639 pp. $3.75.

To encompass the significant changes and new developments of the past six or seven years, Professor MacDonald has revised his textbook on state government and administration, which was first published in 1933. The volume is now divided into two parts: government and administration. Interstate relations now receive a separate chapter. Sections have also been added to deal with new state activities, including liquor control, industrial hygiene, and planning. Chapters on business, labor, welfare and revenues have been rewritten. As an interesting summary of the events of the last few years, it is a worthwhile exercise to compare the first edition with the present book. For the rest, it remains an intelligently written volume with a very real use for college students and others.

M.R.

Additional Books and Reports Received

Assessment

Assessment of Real Estate in Kansas. Topeka, Research Department, Kansas Legislative Council, 1940. xi, 53 pp. mimeo.

Equalization Agencies. Sixth progress report of the Committee on Assessment Organization and Personnel. Chicago, National Association of Assessing Officers, 1940. 62 pp. One dollar.

Democracy

In Defense of Democracy (third edition). By Frank Murphy, with introductory notes by Charles A. Beard and Franklin D. Roosevelt. Washington, D. C., American Council on Public Affairs, 1940. 15 pp. 25 cents.

Fire Insurance

Fire Insurance Rates on Municipally Owned Property in Colorado. By William H. Slaton. Boulder, Colorado Municipal League, 1940. 12 pp. mimeo.

Fireworks

Regulation of Fireworks. By Carl N. Everstine. Baltimore, Research Division, Maryland Legislative Council. 1940. 61 pp. mimeo.

Government—General

Essentials of American Government (Third edition thoroughly revised). By Frederic A. Ogg and P. Orman Ray. New York City, D. Appleton-Century Company, 1940. viii, 634 pp. $3.25.

Legislation

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